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The American Board
and slave holding
Hartford, 1846

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THE
AMERICAN BOARD
AND
SLAVEHOLDING.

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BY REV. WM. W. PATTON,  
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THE AMERICAN BOARD

AND

SLAVEHOLDING.

THE PARTIES.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has come in collision with the rising anti-slavery sentiment of the world. The great organ of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches of America, the eldest-born of the sisterhood of benevolent societies, has come in collision with the greatest of modern reforms. The friends of the slave declare that the influence of the Board has been with the oppressor and against those who are laboring and praying for the deliverance of the down-trodden—that the crime of claiming property in man has been extenuated, excused, and even defended, as consistent with a good Christian character, and as furnishing no bar to admission into the church—that slaveholders have been honored and endorsed by election as corporate members and missionaries, that ‘robbery’ (of the slave) has been received as ‘sacrifice,’ by the indiscriminate solicitation and reception of funds among slaveholders, and that churches have been established under their supervision, into which slaveholders are unhesitatingly received. It will be observed that I have not spoken of a ‘collision between the American Board and the Anti-Slavery Society,’ which is the heading of a series of articles on this subject in the New York Evangelist. I know of no reason why the parties should be so described, unless it be to excite prejudices against the anti-slavery cause. It has often seemed to me that a portion of the prominent ministers and church members owed the anti-slavery cause a deep grudge, which they were determined eternally to cherish, because they were not its parents. The other benevolent societies were begotten in their presence, or at least they were on hand at the baptism, and had an influence in the process of education. But this anti-slavery cause has grown into its present position of importance without their concurrence and despite their opposition. It never asked their permission to be born, nor to live after it was born, and when they frowned upon it, it would not die. They moved earth against it, (that is, the ecclesiastical earth,) and for various reasons, induced presbyteries, associations, synods, assemblies, and conventions, to denounce the infant cause and to strangle it while in the cradle. But the set time for the deliverance of the slave had come. ‘For the oppression of the poor, for the sigh-

ing of the needy, now will I arise, said the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.' God smiled, and it grew and became a giant. But these individuals can never forget that, by their own guilty reluctance, they have been deprived of the honor of originating and carrying forward this cause, and they regard it as Sarah did the son of Hagar, when she said, 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac,' or, paraphrased and *applied*, it would read thus: 'Cast out from your sympathies, your prayers, your meetings, your alms, the bondmen in this land and the society which professes to care for them: for the bondman's society shall not be admitted to the churches, along with *'our'* Bible, Tract and Mission Societies.' There are many who have not yet become convinced that good can come out of Nazareth, and supposing that the mass of the church still sympathize with them, would fain represent that the opposition to the Board comes altogether from this hated and anathematized anti-slavery society. But this is wholly incorrect, for

1. There is now no national anti-slavery society recognized by *all* abolitionists, as at the head of the enterprize. 2. No anti-slavery society, as such, has memorialized the Board on the subject of slavery. 3. The memorialists are not all members of an anti-slavery society. 4. Many ecclesiastical bodies have, since the meeting of the Board, protested against its doctrine and report. 5. Remonstrances of a similar nature have come from Canada and from over the Atlantic. Deny it as they may, the Board has placed itself across the channel along which the united and rising and swelling anti-slavery sentiment of the WORLD is rushing. 'The despised band of *'fanatics'* has increased to an army, and according to prophecy, *'the little one has become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.'* Their words of truth have been scattered like living coals on the conscience, and have *'gone down,'* as Garrison said, not into oblivion, but *'into the hearts of the people.'* Thousands not nominally connected with them, stand ready to act decidedly when the issue comes. Let this be plainly understood, and in its corroboration let me quote the concluding portion of an indignant remonstrance just received from Scotland, having been adopted by the Glasgow Emancipation Society's Committee, after receiving the Report of the American Board:

"So far as the influence of this Report may extend, it can but work evil, and *only* evil, to the cause of Liberty and Christianity. Its tendency appears to us to be to establish principles subversive of the foundation of moral government, viz:

1. That holding and using human beings as property, and breeding and trading in slaves, are consistent with a *'credible profession of Christianity,'* and that ceasing from these sins, is not included in the Gospel idea of *'Repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ.'*

2. That a wrong done to man is less sinful, in proportion as it becomes *'intimately interwoven with the relations and movements of the social system.'*

3. That slaveholders, polygamists, concubines, thieves and robbers, become less guilty and more worthy of Christian confidence

and respect, in proportion as their numbers increase, and as they are enabled to band together and to pass laws to legalize and justify their evil deeds, and make them essential elements of the social state.

These principles seem to us to constitute the basis of this Report. On behalf of the Committee of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, we therefore wish to record our earnest protest against it; and against the slaveholding religion which the Board and its supporters are seeking to propagate among the heathen, as the religion of Him who came to 'break every yoke and let the oppressed go free,' and who forbids his followers to 'join hands with thieves, or to be part-takers with adulterers.'

JOHN MURRAY, }
WM. Smeal, } *Secretaries."*

OTHER SOCIETIES INVOLVED.

It may seem singular to some, that the Board should be singled out from the circle of societies, and made the object of special attack ;—and it may be asked, 'are they sinners above all other societies, because they have suffered such things?' In reply, and to the other societies, I may say, 'I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,' in the esteem of the friends of the slave.

For my own part, I am free to confess, that the connection of the Board with slaveholding has not been more reprehensible, and perhaps not as much so, as that of the Bible and Tract Societies, and I may also add, the Home Missionary Society. Look at the facts in the case. The Bible Society professes to do its utmost to give the Bible to the world. In this land are three millions of slaves, destitute of the Bible, and forbidden by law to have it. What has the Bible Society said or done about this fact, which comes directly within the scope of their operations? As far as I can learn, *absolutely nothing*. The public has yet to learn from any of their annual reports, or from the speeches at their anniversaries, that such a fact is true. A few years since, the Society announced that it had supplied all the destitute families in the United States who were willing to receive it, with a copy of the Scriptures, while they knew that there were *two hundred and fifty thousand* families, or one-sixth of all the families in the land, and nearly one half of the *destitute* families in the country, who had not even had the Bible *offered* to them! In their reports and Anniversary Addresses, the Roman Catholic Priests and the Pope are most heartily cursed because they withhold the Bible from the common people. Why is there such studied silence about the guilt of Protestants at the South, who will not permit their slaves to have the Bible? There are but two millions of Catholics in this country kept without the Bible, and there are three millions of slaves in the same destitute condition. Why speak so boldly and frequently of the former, and shrink timidly into silence about the latter? More might be said concern-

ing this Society, were their conduct the particular subject of these articles.*

Look now at the Tract Society. It has been pretty well chastised of late for its immorality in altering the facts of history and the sentiments of authors, and it may seem cruel to inflict new stripes on a fresh account—but the truth must out. This Society professes to act through the press in promoting holiness and overthrowing sin. In the prosecution of this laudable design, it has published tracts against adultery, theft, sabbath-breaking, lotteries, gambling, intemperance, &c. Did there ever issue from their 'House,' however, a tract against the great crime of *manstealing*, or slaveholding? *Never*. Why not? It surely is a sin, a common sin, a great sin, forbidden by every principle of the Bible, and moreover prevalent in our land. Yet the Committee never would issue a tract on that subject, no, not one of the mildest kind—they would not administer a homœopathic dose! One gentleman offered to place in their hands fifty dollars to be proposed according to custom, as a premium for the best tract on that subject, but they altogether scouted the idea.

The connection of the Home Missionary Society with slaveholding, arises from their aiding churches in the slave States, into which slaveholders, remaining such, are received. Thus the money of abolitionists is used to build up pro-slavery churches, just such as have cursed the South, and sanctified the system and practice, till it has increased fourfold.

These facts, new as they may be to some, have been familiar to intelligent abolitionists for years, and have caused great grief. They loved the objects for which these societies were formed, and they loved the poor slave, yet here stood the benevolent associations of the day leagued together against the slave, striking hands with his oppressors, and practically endorsing the oppression. What were they to do? What they did—determine that this state of things should be reversed, that the community should be made to see that opposition to oppression was a part of the Gospel, and that every Society which undertook to carry the Gospel, should understand that their influence and action should be against slavery, whenever they met it in the prosecution of their work. Abolitionists (though often charged with it) never asked benevolent societies to forsake their appropriate object, and to become anti-slavery societies. They only asked that, as they met slavery, *in their respective fields, in the regular prosecution of their work*, they would act against it, and not for it—would preach an anti-slavery, not a pro-slavery Gospel.

*A number of years since, the sum of \$5000 was guaranteed to the Bible Society, on condition that it should be used in supplying the slaves with the Word of God. *The donation was rejected!* In 1841, a Bible Agent was arrested in New Orleans for offering the Bible to a slave. When brought before the Court he pleaded ignorance of the law, and was on that ground released, the Judge declaring that the Agent had but just escaped the penitentiary, and warning him never to repeat his act, an assurance to which effect, was given by the Agent, or the N. Orleans Society. Yet the American Bible Society never remonstrated, never adverted to this interference with their object.

WHY SINGLE OUT THE BOARD ?

This question will naturally and properly be asked at this stage of our inquiries. The answer may be given in a few words. Why, when many cases of a similar nature are pending, do the parties agree to have only one tried in the courts ? Because the final decision of that will settle the others, as they all stand or fall together. In like manner the Benevolent Societies occupy a similar position, and if the community can be so enlightened that under the influence of public opinion, one of the number shall be brought on to right ground, the others must follow. The American Board was selected because the facts in connection with it, providentially called the attention of abolitionists to it, and as they began there, so they continue to strike at this pillar of slaveholding, hoping that soon success will crown their efforts, and thus the way be prepared for all the Societies to exert, as called for, a wholesome anti-slavery influence.

OCCASION OF THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY.

For some years past, abolitionists have been remonstrating with the Board for their connection with slaveholding, by honorary and corporate members, slaveholding missionaries, funds derived from unpaid toil, and the like : but during the last two years, these topics have attracted but little attention, compared with the notice taken of a fact known for *many years* to the 'Prudential Committee' of the Board, but only recently discovered by the religious public : It will be the best stated in the language of those who in 1844 memorialized the Board on the subject.

"Your memorialists are informed that slavery is actually tolerated in the churches under the patronage of the Board among the Choctaws and other Indian tribes, by the admission of slaveholding members."

The Committee, to whom the memorial was referred, reported that year only in part, requesting a year for opportunity to ascertain all the facts, and to present their final report, but stating that 'they see no reason to charge the missionaries among the Choctaws, or any where else, with either a violation or neglect of duty.'

The next year, (Sept. 1845,) at Brooklyn, the Committee made their final report, admitting the facts charged, but proceeded in a labored argument to justify the practice of receiving slaveholders to the mission churches, which report the Board unanimously adopted. Upon this point, the friends of the slave take issue with the Board, contending that no slave-holder, properly so called, ought to be admitted at the present day to the church of Christ.

If there be any guilt in the connection of the mission churches with slaveholding, the Board has made that guilt its own, by solemnly and unanimously endorsing it as right, and putting forth a document in justification thereof. They have acted intelligently and deliberately. The Committee took a year to ascertain the facts, and the Board had a year in which, on the supposition the

facts alleged were correct, to study their Bible, to seek light in prayer, and to revolve the subject in all its phases, before their minds. The twelve months passed, and the Board reassembled to record their judgment, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, being thirty eight-years and six months after the British Parliament declared the slave-trade to be piracy, that slaveholding was not an overt sin, which ought to exclude its perpetrator from the churches under their care! It would seem that the bare statement of the position taken was sufficient to reveal its atrocity, and to commend its defenders to the Roman Catholic Bishop, Bartholomew de las Casas, (who is said to have first proposed the establishment of a regular system of commerce in the inhabitants of Africa,) as his faithful followers and copyists. It seems to have been the lot of slavery always to have enjoyed the protection of the Church.

THE REPORT ON SLAVEHOLDING.

It will be proper to make some reference to this document, as containing the latest exposition of the views of the Board.*

It is cheerfully to be stated at the outset, that many commendable rebukes of slavery, *as a system*, are contained in that document. I have not room to quote them, but my readers may rely upon my word, that *the system* is unequivocally denounced and branded as unrighteous and unchristian. I find no fault with the Board for a withholding of opinion or for erroneous doctrine *quoad hoc*. But I may be permitted to inquire, what the pages so occupied have to do with *the simple point* submitted? The memorialists had not requested the Board to denounce *the system*, had not complained that the mission churches defended *the system*; but they asked the Board to speak out concerning *the practice*, to rebuke the personal, individual sin of slave-holding. Why, then, does this famous report, lauded by many as the very essence of wisdom, entirely avoid a discussion of what constitutes slave-holding, as a personal act or practice, and whether it involves sin in all cases? These topics would have been in place and to the point, but their discussion would have seriously embarrassed the Committee and the Board. Unanimity was the idol before which every thing was sacrificed. Therefore, the *system* was denounced and the practice incidentally defended. When a report on slaveholding can satisfy and unite men whose sentiments are so dissimilar as those of Prof. Stowe and Dr. Wisner, there must be a double meaning or an obscure meaning to the document.

The main argument of the Report, after all, consists of the intro-

*I see that the Emancipator speaks as though the Prudential Committee had taken a step in advance of the late action of the Board in consequence of a circular letter having been sent to the missionaries. The following extract from a letter received by the writer, from one of the Prudential Committee, will set that rumor right. He writes under date of March 9th:—"The Circular to the Cherokees, &c., Missionaries, is probably an old affair. We have done nothing new about that case." From this it appears that, if Secretary Green has written such a letter to the missionaries as the Emancipator states, he has done so wholly on his individual authority.

duction, in which five principles are stated as binding upon all who conduct missions. The *first* refers to the New Testament, as the only infallible guide in propagating the Gospel, and regulating the discipline of Churches. To this I fully assent, with the remark, that we are rather to seek for the *principles* on which the Apostles acted, than for the specific things done. as the former are universally applicable, while the latter are of no authority, beyond their peculiar circumstances and occasions. For instance, while Christians seek among the facts of the New Testament for the principles of Church Government, they do not feel bound to adopt the specific arrangements in all their minutiae, which then obtained; and in accordance with this view, we find that no denomination conforms, in all its regulations, to the primitive model. The Apostles acted in view of the age in which they lived, and the country where the churches were located, and if we imitate them, not according to 'the letter which killeth,' but according to 'the spirit which giveth life,' we also shall act in view of the present age, and of present countries.

The second principle laid down in the Report, is thus expressed—"The primary object aimed at in missions, should be to bring men to a saving knowledge of Christ, by making known to them the way of salvation through his cross. It has regard to individual character, and is an object simple in itself, and purely spiritual." To this, also, rightly interpreted, I cordially assent. Let me ask, however, whether a man is brought to 'a saving knowledge of Christ,' by being kept in ignorance of his sins? Does not repentance make a part of the religion of Christ, and does not repentance consist in a hearty renunciation of all sin? Is it no sin to deny liberty to a fellow man—to claim property in a fellow-man—to practically maintain the horrible chattel principle, with regard to human beings? We are urged to remember that Christianity 'has regard to the individual character,' that the object of Missions is 'purely spiritual.' Yes, and this practice of slaveholding is an 'individual,' personal affair, pertaining to a man's 'spiritual' interests, as the slaveholder will realize at the last day; and one ground of our complaint is that the Board in dealing with slaveholding, abandons the very principle here laid down, by denouncing *the system*, while it defends *the individual practice*. What we desire, is, that the missionaries will go to each individual and call upon him to cease to do evil, instead of wasting words about the general system. Thus viewed, it will be found that opposition to slaveholding, and to all oppression, comes strictly within the limits of that 'primary object,' so cautiously defined.

The third position affirms that baptism and the Lord's supper, are designed for all who give credible evidence of repentance and faith in Christ, and are of course to be administered to all such among the heathen. This is an important point, and should be calmly viewed. Whether I would assent to it, depends entirely upon the interpretation put upon it. The assertion made is a sweeping one, and in its present unqualified form, can with difficulty, if at all, be maintained. One thing is certain, none of the Pastors and Churches who patronize the Board, practice according to their own rule. They not only require a Christian experience and life previous to admission into

their churches, but also an orthodox creed. They will admit that a person might give evidence of piety, who, nevertheless, by some perversity of intellect or education, did not believe in the full divinity of the Saviour. Yet they would not hesitate to refuse admission to such a person, on the ground of a general principle that must be sustained. Now, why be strict as to the theory of religion, and lax as to its practice? Why reject a man for an error in his creed, and admit him notwithstanding an error in his life? But it will be said that the Report alludes to the churches among the heathen, where there is but one to which the convert can belong, and where, consequently, the rules must be less strict. To this I answer, less strict, if you please, as to creeds, but not as to morals. But the Board have cut themselves off from any such retreat, by the universal terms of their proposition. The inference is indeed particular, the conclusion specifies, by way of application, the heathen, but the *premises* are without qualification or limit. "As the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are obviously designed by Christ to be the means of grace for *all* who give credible evidence of repentance and faith in him," &c. There is no explaining away this doctrine, so explicitly stated, without giving up the whole Report as inconclusive and erroneous, for it is the foundation of the whole. I boldly state, then, that the third 'fundamental' principle of the Report is practically repudiated by every church and pastor who sustains the Board, and that the Board are endeavoring to defend the conduct of the missionaries among the Choctaws, by putting forth a principle which, as stated, they do not themselves receive.

But let us examine this point farther, for abolitionists are not afraid to look the Report full in the face, though they are often told that it ought to satisfy them to know that it was unanimously adopted by a body of great and wise men, composed of Doctors of Divinity, Professors and Presidents of Colleges and Theological Seminaries, and Honorables and Excellencies.* But the old adage *may* be true here, 'Great men make great mistakes.' We need not fear, then, to consider well all the positions of this extraordinary document. I might safely admit the truth of this third proposition, and even of the application made to the case of the Choctaw slaveholders, and yet entirely dissent from the doctrine of the Board. I might admit that in consequence of the blameworthy concealment of the truth, in consequence of the suppression of the anti-slavery part of the Gospel, slaveholders may have hitherto become Christians and thus entered the church of right as far as *they* were concerned. The fault was in the missionaries, and the question is, shall they hereafter preach as heretofore, but a part of the truth, so that men *can* become Christians, *can* be converted, still remaining slaveholders? 'This is the very point of my complaint, that the missionaries keep the people so in the dark, that when they have actually done all that

*If any should complain that my language here partakes too much of vulgar cant, I would remind such that I am only stating the argument in behalf of the Board as pressed on me by its advocates, who argue from the high standing of the corporate members to the righteousness of their conduct. If it borders on the ridiculous, it is their fault, not mine.

they know or were ever told was duty, they still are slaveholders !* Much exultation has been had because Rev. A. A. Phelps, at the meeting of the Board, refused to answer Dr. Hawes categorically, whether a slaveholder could be a Christian? Bro. Phelps must answer for himself as to his silence, but the question does not appear to me in the least puzzling. Can a slaveholder be a Christian?—Yes; *provided* he has never had the sin of his course properly laid before him—No, if he has enjoyed such instruction. This simple test makes the case plain with regard to the Cherokee and Choctaw slaveholders, and completely destroys the battery opened upon our position by this third principle, even if it be admitted.—We reply to the Board thus: You affirm that the ordinances are to be administered to “all who give credible evidence of repentance and faith.” This we are willing, for the argument’s sake, to admit, but we contend that it harmonizes perfectly with our principles; for we do not allow that those Choctaw slaveholders *can* “give credible evidence of repentance and faith,” *if* the missionaries have faithfully preached the whole truth on the subject of slaveholding. You must then choose, according to our view of the case, one or the other horn of this dilemma. Assert that the Choctaw slaveholders do give credible evidence of conversion, and therefore ought to be admitted into the church, and you condemn your missionaries, for such conversions could only occur by their keeping back the truth on the subject of human rights. On the other hand, allow that the slaveholders in question do not furnish evidence of piety, and your own principle excludes them from the church. The Board somehow wish to compass a moral impossibility; that is, to endorse the piety of the slaveholders, and at the same time to affirm that “they see no reason to charge the missionaries with either a violation or neglect of duty.” It must be evident to an unprejudiced mind, that the piety of a slaveholder, to be real, must have had its birth amid darkness—a darkness for which the missionaries are responsible. Allowing, then, that the third principle of the Report defends the entrance of the slaveholders into the church, it does it at the expense of the reputation of the missionaries. If the missionaries would pursue the right plan, there would be no conversions *in* slaveholding, but always *from* slaveholding, so that this famous third principle would not even apparently be inconsistent with the demands of the friends of freedom.

The fourth principle affirms that the missionaries are the proper judges of the piety of the professed converts, which I leave with the simple remark, that they are the judges, responsible, however to the churches for the *principles* on which they proceed. The principles, the churches may, and ought to determine; the specific

*A correspondent of the Emancipator, writes from Georgia, under date of April 30th—“While in Missouri I met with a young man who was recently connected as a teacher with the Missionaries among the Choctaws and Cherokees, who are sustained by the ‘American Board.’ Here, he said, the Indians were taught that Slavery is sanctioned by the Bible. He remarked that he had often heard the Missionaries reasoning from the Bible in favor of Slavery, after the fashion of Dr. Rice of Cincinnati, and other divines. Slaves were employed in nearly all the families of the Missionaries.”

application of them must, in the nature of the case, be entrusted to the missionaries.

The fifth and last principle is, that after admission to the church, Christians are to be instructed so that their graces may be developed. This is, beyond doubt true; but not in such a sense as to mean that immoralities of life, such as slaveholding, are to be left unrebuked till the practiser is in the church. The Bible no where affirms such a doctrine. But this involves a question which will be hereafter discussed.

To sum up, then, the 'wisdom' of the Board as to these five 'fundamental' positions, just as far as they have any rational meaning, and are at all applicable, they are the merest truisms, and the Report might as well have adduced the multiplication table in support of its views. They avail nothing in making out a case in opposition to the views of abolitionists.

The remainder of the Report is occupied with a statement of facts in regard to the missions in question, with an argument as to the mode in which social sins are to be treated, and with an attempt so to discriminate between the system and the individual practice of slaveholding, as to make the latter compatible with church membership.

It appears that there are thirty-five slaveholders in the mission churches among the Choctaws and Cherokees, which embrace in all, eight hundred and forty-three members, of whom one hundred and fifty-two are slaves.

The Report also condemns the laws which prohibit slaves from being taught to read, embarrass emancipation, &c.

Although the document is said to maintain the ground that slaveholding, of itself, is not sinful, yet once an expression is used which implies a contrary doctrine—a doctrine of which Dr. Bacon classically remarked—'The churches won't stand such nonsense.' The phrase occurs—'Holding slaves, or any thing else involving what is morally wrong.' But it may have been an oversight, since Dr. Bacon, in his article in the N. Y. Evangelist, characterizes the doctrine that slaveholding is essentially and always sinful, as a 'miserable, paltering, juggling sophism, that can have no better effect than to mislead and madden enthusiastic minds, and to irritate the passions of the slaveholder, while it sears his conscience.' We may, however, have occasion to look at the Doctor's analysis of slaveholding, before we are done, that we may ascertain what right he had to pronounce such a judgment.

The various points of the Report still undiscussed, will be noticed hereafter, in connection with certain fundamental positions yet to be established.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS.

Since commencing this discussion, I find from conversation with certain ministerial brethren, that a portion of my remarks have been misunderstood. It has been charged upon me, that I have slandered the ministers and Churches of the whole land, who have not fallen in with the views of abolitionists, affirming that they

entertain an eternal grudge against the anti-slavery cause, because they did not originate and could not control it. Now, it will be seen by referring to my articles, that allusion was made to 'a portion of the prominent ministers and church members,' not of Connecticut, particularly, nor of the patrons of the Board, particularly, but as my subsequent remarks show, of the land in general, including the principal denominations. Why should remarks of 'a portion' be applied to all? Let it be noticed, moreover, that I do not *affirm* that those referred to, entertained the grudge for the reason suggested, but I threw it out as an *impression*, which their conduct and the remarks of their followers had made on my mind. My words are, 'It has often *seemed to me*,' &c. I would not directly *charge* the fact in question, because I am not able to search their hearts, and because I would charitably *hope* better things, though I thus speak, yet I must honestly confess, that many things which prominent men have said and done, have painfully *impressed* me, (and I may add, many others also,) with the view stated. I may view their conduct with prejudice, and be blameworthy for entertaining the thought, still I must say as before, so 'it has often seemed to me.' I acknowledge that this particular subject is aside from the special object of my articles, but as those who advocate the opposite position, take occasion freely to give their impressions of abolitionists and their motives, so, as an incidental matter, I used the same freedom with regard to 'a portion' of anti-abolitionists.

Another point needs to be set in a right light. I have said that the Board sacrificed everything to unanimity. It has been supposed that I intended to represent the Board as a parcel of trickish, dishonest, unprincipled men, in whom no confidence should be placed. Such a thought was far from my breast. On the contrary, I doubt not, that as a body, they have acted with no conscious purpose to trample on principle, and that they are entitled to our confidence and love as Christian men, who wish to serve Jesus Christ, and promote his kingdom. Still, in perfect consistency with that, I may hold that their deep interest in the point at issue, their previous controversies with abolitionists, and previous commitment on the principles in question, together with a natural anxiety to have this troublesome subject comfortably disposed of by a united vote, might warp their minds and lead them to sacrifice scruples, and doubts, and strong wishes, on the altar of unanimity. He has lived in vain who does not know that good men, when greatly anxious to promote their peculiar views, may be almost unconsciously swayed by motives which are based on wordly expediency. I need only to refer to the controversies in the Presbyterian Church, and in Connecticut itself, for illustration.

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVED.

The controversy between the Board and the friends of the slave in this and other lands, involves more than a trifling point of church discipline, or a practical arrangement of small moment in the conducting of missionary operations. A great principle is involved

which lies at the foundation of the missionary enterprise, and embraces within its circle all the missions through the world. We must be careful in defining a course of treatment for one sin, that we do not give directions which will prove baneful in the case of other sins. Sin, after all, though differing in modification and form, is essentially the same, and is to be regarded and treated as a unit. If we make exceptions and lay down principles in order to shield one class of wrong-doers, we may be called upon to apply our rules in another direction, which is not so pleasant. We must remember that the degree of light enjoyed, decides the moral character of an act, and that some men in the world may commit adultery with as few rebukes of conscience as slaveholders retain their slaves, *provided* the missionaries sent to them say as little about the sin of adultery as they do about the sin of slaveholding. The action of the Board has to do with something more than the one sin of slaveholding. Of this they are aware, for the Report uses this language,—‘But slavery is not the only social wrong to be met with in the progress of the missionary work, and to which the principles adopted in prosecuting that work must probably be applied.’ It will then be seen, that the question before us is fundamental. that whatever may be its proper decision, it ought to arrest the attention of the Board, and of its supporters; it ought to be fairly, thoroughly and candidly discussed, as one on which the prosperity and efficiency of the Board in a great measure depends. What is the general principle involved? It is this: *Are wrong-doers to be received into the Church, remaining such, with the hope that ultimately they may be persuaded to reform; and to that end are the missionaries to be silent with regard to those forms of wrong-doing, so that, through ignorance of the truth, on these points, men may give evidence of conversion, before renouncing the deeds in question?* In other words, is the Church to be a vast lazaretto, into which the plague-stricken are to be admitted, in order to a gradual cure? It will be noticed that I ask, ‘are *wrong-doers* to be received, &c. This language is used advisedly, although Dr. Bacon, in the N. Y. Evangelist, attempts to fritter away the slaveholding which the Board defends, to the mere continuance of a legal relation which it is out of the power of the master to annihilate. But Dr. Bacon’s article and the Report, are different documents, though agreeing in some points. The Report of the Board, for which the Board is responsible, admits that the slaveholding in question is one which includes moral wrong, whereas, the bare continuance of a legal relation, which the master cannot possibly reach, involves no wrong at all, on his part. That the Report makes this admission, I will show by extracts hereafter, when I come to discuss the legal relation and kindred topics. Assuming, then, that the Board allows that there is wrong-doing in the case of the Cherokee and Choctaw slaveholders, when we come to generalize the principle, it stands as I have stated.

THE BOARD ARE CONSISTENT.

Those who have the direction of the missions are not weak men, who know not how to be consistent, or dare not be so. The

general principle stated above, is clearly before their minds, and they have been carrying out their views in all parts of the world, and in reference to wrong-doing of many different kinds,—at least, so I understand the facts, and if I am misinformed, let the initiated correct me.

Let me cite one instance as an example, where the facts are believed to be undeniable. My readers are aware, that in India, the population is divided into castes, between which are impassable social and religious barriers. Says a writer on this subject, 'Every individual remains invariably in the caste in which he was born, practices its duties, and is debarred from ever aspiring to a higher, whatever may be his merit or genius.' Thus all motives to exertion are annihilated. Such is the contempt of the higher castes for the lower, that they often inflict blows upon them on meeting. The different castes will not eat with each other. This feature of the Hindoo system, which fills the whole community with bitter prejudice and hatred, and is a barrier to all improvement, and the greatest obstacle to religion, has been allowed by the missionaries of the Board in their converts, and what is most horrible, has even been carried out at the *communion table*, where, of all places this side of heaven, human brotherhood and equality should be recognized. It is proper to say, however, that the missionaries of the Board have not sinned alone in this matter. Bishop Corrie declares with regard to Episcopal missions, 'The different castes sit on different mats, on different sides of the Church; they approach the Lord's table at different times, and had once different cups, or changed them before the lower classes began to communicate.' Now, who does not feel that all this is utterly anti-Christian, and if Christ were on earth, would be repudiated with horror as contrary to his plainest commands? And who does not also see that this abhorrent practice has been allowed in the consistent carrying out of the principle which underlies the whole Report of the Board? The missionaries, instead of saying to the professed converts 'You must abandon caste, you must receive all men, and especially all Christians, as your brethren—the precepts of the Saviour are explicit on this point, and you must regard this matter as a test of piety, which, if you cannot stand, we must not receive you into the church,' allowed them to enter the church and bring with them all their prejudice and contempt, and (may I not add, as necessarily implied,) hatred?

But the Providence of God has taught the missionaries a lesson on this subject which has apparently convinced them of the unsoundness of the general principle on which they have acted—a lesson which they ought to have learned long since from the Bible, and which the Christian world would understand in all its applications, were it not for the wretched ideas of expediency which prevail. Recent communications from the India Missions inform us that the missionaries have at last seen their error and are now determinately setting their faces against caste, and disciplining the church members who refuse to abandon it. I venture to predict that the Board will in like manner soon see the unsoundness of the same principle as applied to slaveholding, and totally abandon it. I want my readers to keep the general principle, as stated in the early part of this arti

cle, before their minds, and remember that it admits of an application to nearly all forms of oppression, superstition, idolatry and crime. I advocate the opposite principle, that the church should, to a man, oppose all forms of wrong-doing, and that he who, after instruction, has not piety enough to renounce them, whatever may be his other evidences of conversion, ought not to be admitted. Instead of adding remarks of my own, I will subjoin the following admirable statement of Rev. Albert Barnes, who, though illustrating his views by the temperance reformation, yet at the end declares that they apply to the cause of the slave :—

“I lay down this position as fully tenable, that, as it is organized by its Great Head, the Church has power for reforming mankind which no other institution has or can have; and that in all works of moral reform it should stand foremost. It should be united. There should be no vacillating plans, and no vacillating members. Such should be the character of the Church, that any feasible plan for staying the progress of vice, should call to its aid with certainty, an efficient coadjutor there. Instead of going on to illustrate this sentiment in a general manner, I shall select one single department of the work of reformation, and show what *ought* to have been and what *has* been the influence of the Church there. I allude to the temperance reformation.” He then lays down three positions :

“1. That the Church of Christ should have been foremost in this work; and its efforts should have been entire and unbroken.

2. A state of things has grown up in the Church which rendered its united and efficient action in the cause, morally impossible.

3. The consequences were such as any one could have easily foreseen. The Church moved slowly. The members were reluctant to sacrifice their capital, and abandon their business. The ministry hesitated long before they dared to use language such as would be understood. It became *necessary* to form a society *out of the Church*—though composed, to a great extent, of those who were the professed friends of religion—to do what should have been done *in it*.”

After stating his belief that the backwardness of the Church is still the great obstacle in the way of the temperance reformation, he adds, —“The same remarks might be made of any and every other needed reformation. In every thing affecting purity of morals; chastity of life; the observance of the Sabbath; the cause of human liberty; the freedom of those held in bondage; the Church holds an almost if not quite controlling power. Evils are always ramified and interlocked with each other, and often interlocked with good. Sin winds its way along by many a serpentine and subterranean passage into the Church, and entwines its roots around the altar, and assumes new vigor of growth and a kind of sacredness by its connection there. There is scarcely a form of evil which can be attacked, which does not in some way extend itself into the Church. There is scarcely a steamboat or a railroad car that runs on the Sabbath, that has not some connection with some member of the Church; nor is there an attempt at reformation which can be made, which does not impinge on some custom in the communion of the faithful. I make not these remarks in the spirit of complaining. I pretend not even

here to say what is right, or what is wrong. I am illustrating merely the *power* which the Church holds on moral subjects, and the manner in which that power is exerted. 'The law should go out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,' and my remark now is, that the Church holds the power over all these forms of reformation, and is responsible to her great Lord for the manner in which that power is used."

WILL THE CHURCHES SANCTION IT?

'The longer I reflect on this controversy, the more am I convinced that the public mind ought to be held to the general principle stated above, as constituting the broad ground of debate. Let me repeat it. Here is the question to which the church members of the land are to answer yea or nay :

Are wrong-doers to be received into the Church, remaining such, with the hope that ultimately they may be persuaded to reform ; and to that end, are the missionaries to be silent with regard to these forms of wrong-doing, so that, through ignorance of the truth, on these points, men may give evidence of conversion, before renouncing the deeds in question ?

With regard to this principle, I ask with emphasis, *Will the churches sanction it ?* I cannot believe that they will, with a Bible in their hands which contains such sentiments as these, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." "He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Is it not evident that Jesus Christ refuses to recognize the piety or church membership of those who practice any known sin ?

But some will stoutly deny that the Report defends the principle stated. I shall proceed, therefore, to *prove* that the Report does definitely argue in favor of receiving into the church many classes of *acknowledged wrong-doers*—not persons sustaining an abstract relation, but actual *wrong-doers*. It will be found that the passages cited all have reference to this general principle, and I hold in reserve other extracts which bear on slave-holding specifically, and in which immorality is admitted to characterize the act.

"But slavery is not the only social wrong to be met in the progress of the missionary work, and to which the principles which are adopted in prosecuting that work must probably be applied. There are the castes of India, deeply and inveterately inwrought in the very texture of society, causing to the mass of the people hereditary and deep degradation, *leading to the most inhuman and contemptuous feelings and conduct* in social life, and presenting most formidable barriers to every species of improvement. There are also the *unrestrained exactions* made in the form of revenue, or of military or other service, connected with a species of feudalism, prevailing in ma-

ny unenlightened communities, which are *most unrighteous in their character* and paralyzing in their influence, and cause unlimited distress to individuals and families. There are also those *various forms and degrees of oppression*, whether of law or of usage, prevailing under the arbitrary governments which bear sway over the larger part of the earth's surface. So that the principles which we draw from the word of God for our guidance as a missionary society, are not for use among a few pagan tribes merely, but among nearly all the benighted nations of the earth."

What is the doctrine here taught? That the principle of admitting partakers in social wrong to the churches in order to their gradual and ultimate reformation is to be applied generally, as the missionary work comes in contact with the 'organic sins' of the world. Some of these, and their characteristics are given, as 'leading to the most inhuman and contemptuous feelings and conduct,' 'unrestrained exactions,' 'most unrighteous in their character,' 'various forms and degrees of oppression. We are explicitly informed that the principles of the Report on the subject of slaveholding 'must probably be applied' to all these and kindred forms of sin. But to make 'assurance doubly sure,' the report proceeds in the next paragraph yet more specifically to declare that those guilty of such wrong-doing are to be welcomed to the church.

"Is this Board, then, in propagating the gospel, to be held responsible for directly working out those re-organizations of the social system, without giving Christian truth time to produce its changes in the hearts of individuals and in public sentiment, and without being allowed to make any practical use of those most effective influences which are involved—in respect to all who have grace in their hearts—in the special ordinances of the gospel? Or, should it be found, as the result of experience, that souls among the heathen are, in fact, regenerated, by the Holy Spirit, *before they are freed from all participation in these social and moral evils*, and that convincing evidence can be given that they are so regenerated,—then may not the master and the slave, the ruler and the subject, giving such evidence of spiritual renovation, be all gathered into the same fold of Christ? And may they not all there and in this manner, under proper teaching, learn the great lesson (so difficult for partially sanctified men to learn) that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free; but that all are one in him? And may they not, under these influences, have effectually nurtured in them those feelings of brotherly love, and that regard for each other's rights and welfare, in which alone is found the remedy for all such evils?—*Under such influences may not the master be prepared to break the bonds of the slave, and the oppressive ruler led to dispense justice to the subject, and the proud Brahmin fraternally to embrace the man of low caste; and each to do it cheerfully, because it is humane and right, and because they are all children of the great household of God?* By such influences, mainly, is not the great moral transformation to be wrought in the master and the ruler, in the bondman and the oppressed, all-important to both, and the only sure guaranty for permanent improvement in the social character and condition of either?"

Let the churches study this paragraph, and particularly the italic-

zed sentence, and learn from it that the Board advocate the receiving into the mission churches, the master who will not 'break the bonds of the slave,' the Brahmin who is too 'proud' to 'fraternally embrace the man of low caste,' and 'the oppressive ruler' who will not 'dispense justice to the subject,' in the hope that under 'such influences' as will be gradually brought to bear on them, they will 'be prepared' to do what is 'humane and right.' Was it an assembly of Christian ministers and laymen that unanimously adopted such a doctrine? I could hardly believe it, did I not know the men, and did I not also remember how even good men may be unconsciously blinded to plain Bible truth, and reconciled to error.* But the deed having been done, the *representatives* having acted, the friends of the slave appeal to the *constituents*—to the churches of Christ who sustain the Board. Let us apply this general principle to the temperance cause. Would the churches allow their missionaries (home or foreign,) to receive distillers and rum-sellers into the church with the hope that they may 'be prepared' ultimately to renounce the traffic? Why then endorse the sentiment in its other application?

THEORY *versus* EXPERIENCE ! OR THE BOARD *versus* ITS MISSIONARIES.

Not the least noticeable fact in connection with the Report, is its utter disregard of experience in a hot zeal to maintain its cherished theory. I am reminded thereby of a remark made concerning a Boston daily paper which is noted for clinging to old theories in the face of multiplied facts. Some one said of it, 'It is very conservative.' 'Yes,' was the reply, 'conservative of all antiquated follies.' So anxious has the Board been to defend its position that it has shut its eyes to the light which past missionary experience sheds on the general question at issue. The subject of caste in India is a remarkable illustration and proof of this charge. As long since as eighteen hundred and thirty-four, Bishop Corrie, who had charge of the Episcopal (English) missions in India, became from actual observation convinced that the allowance of caste was working ruin in the churches; and in a charge, thus speaks: "The main barrier to all permanent improvement is, as I trust, in the way of removal—the *heathen usages of caste* in the Christian churches. While the master minds of Swartz and Gericke remained to keep down the attendant heathen

*As some cannot believe that members of the Board would in any circumstances, through any power of prejudice, or any desire of unanimity, act on principles of worldly expediency, the following item of PROOF, though couched in stronger language than I should use, may open the eyes of such to FACTS. Alvan Stewart, Esq., in a Missionary Convention at Syracuse, made a speech, from the report of which in the Syracuse Liberty Intelligencer of Feb. 26th, I extract the following: "He went on in his peculiar and inimitable manner, to relate the circumstances under which he once heard the caucussing of a committee of this Board at the time of one of its annual meetings. He was attending a public meeting at Philadelphia, and was directed to the wrong apartment. He heard caucussing, on principles which he thoughtought to disgrace any political party; how they would do this; and by what means they would bring about that; that they had this and that great man on their side, and all that."

practices, caste was comparatively harmless. It seemed more of a civil institution. But I rejoice to find that *the judgment of all my brethren—of the whole body of Christian Protestant missionaries without exception*, concurs now with my own, that the crisis had arrived, and that *nothing but the total abolition* of all heathen usages, connected with this anti-christian and anti-social system *could save these missions*. An isthmus cast up between Christ and Belial, a bridge left standing for retreat to Paganism, a citadel kept erect within the Christian enclosure for the great adversary's occupation, is what the gospel cannot tolerate. 'The Jesuits' proceedings in China are warnings enough to you.'

Nor is this all the testimony that has been given in. The Board's own missionaries have spoken out on this subject. Rev. Hollis Reed, in his memoir of a 'Converted Brahmin,' alludes to the churches founded by Swartz and others in Southern India, into which also, caste was admitted, and thus testifies as to the results :

"They have not, it is feared, in that part of the country, embraced Christianity, but Christianity has been made to embrace them; and instead of imparting her purity and simplicity, as she is wont to do, she has been blinded with the filthy rags of impure rites, and customs, and *caste*, prejudice and superstition; and she is now exhibited throughout those regions of darkness more in the form of a ludicrous comedian, than as an angel of light."

Others of the Board's missionaries have written home to the Prudential Committee their solemn conviction that caste must in every form be eradicated from the churches, a judgment to which Dr. Scudder of the India Mission, now in this country, has recently given utterance, accompanied with a manly and Christian acknowledgment that a great error had been committed.

The Watchman of the Valley, Jan. 29th, reports a meeting held at Lane Seminary Chapel, at which Rev. Dr. Scudder, more than twenty years a missionary among the heathen of Asia, said, as reported in the Watchman :

"Caste is one of the most formidable obstacles which the missionary has to encounter. Dr. Scudder is convinced that they erred at first in granting any toleration to this absurdity. They ought to have required every candidate for the church to renounce it. It is now much more difficult to break it down, and more difficult, too, to establish right principles on the subject, than if they had begun right. One of the missionaries—Mr. Winslow, we think—had lately taken the true stand, and excluded it altogether from his church. All the missionaries required their communicants to renounce it so far as to sit together at the same communion table."

This, then, is the voice of *experience*—a voice to which the Board would not listen, for they were committed to an opposite *theory*—Consistency required that the principles which shielded *slaveholding* should also extend the same kind of protection to *caste*—that thus the various classes of wrong-doers might be placed on an equal footing. Hence, in opposition to the precepts of the Bible, and in equal opposition to the wisdom of experience and in the face of the judgment of the 'whole body of Christian Protestant missionaries without exception,' among whom were their own missionaries, they

cling to their *theory* with the grasp of a drowning man. The Report holds this language :

"But slavery is not the only social wrong to be met in the progress of the missionary work, and to which the principles which are adopted in prosecuting that work must probably be applied. There are the castes of India, deeply and inveterately inwrought in the very texture of society, causing to the mass of the people hereditary and deep degradation, *leading to the most inhuman and contemptuous feelings and conduct* in social life, and presenting most formidable barriers to every species of improvement."

This is more explicitly reiterated subsequently, where the Report tells us that the 'proud Brahmin' is to be received into the church, that there he 'may be prepared fraternally to embrace the man of low caste!'

Need we wonder that all the arguments, entreaties and warnings of the despised abolitionists failed to prevent a unanimous vote for the adoption of the Report, when they heed so little the admonitions of their missionaries and the lessons of divine Providence?

These remarks may show why abolitionists are so strenuous in opposing the action of the Board. It is because they believe with the Report itself, that 'the principles adopted must affect the whole scheme for evangelizing the world: and are therefore of the utmost importance, and should be most carefully examined and settled.'—Surely it must be no matter of surprise that abolitionists are alarmed and remonstrate, when they conceive that the whole operation of the Board is conducted on a wrong principle, of which the admission of slaveholders to the mission churches is but one illustration. It is time to arouse the members of the church when their Missionary Board unanimously declare that those who refuse 'to break the bonds of the slave,' 'oppressive rulers,' and 'proud Brahmins' are good enough material for a Christian church!

Some intimate that abolitionists have not read the Report with attention. It may prove to be true that they have read it oftener, and studied it more attentively than some who voted for it, and many who on *a priori* grounds would rush to its defence.

This consideration of the general principle involved in the Report, will be appreciated by the Christian community, although some defenders of the Board are very uneasy about it, and innocently wonder why I do not discuss the bare question, 'May a man sustain the legal, abstract, technical relation of slave-owner, and yet be entitled to church-membership?' as though the affirmative of that question were all that the Report implies. Every thing in its season. That question, and others, will be considered in due time, and my readers, I doubt not, will prefer to know *all* that is necessary to a full understanding of the question at issue.

I shall not allow myself to be diverted from the grand question at issue as presented in the Report, by any entreaties of the Board's defenders. Nor shall I allow myself to be silenced by personal assaults which may be made. It has been gravely charged that I am a *young man*, setting myself immodestly in opposition to the combined wisdom of fathers in the ministry. This is no new charge against the advocates of truth. It was an accusation brought by Walpole

against Pitt, to which the latter made this cutting reply, "The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honorable gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny; but content myself with wishing, that I may be one of those whose follies cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience. Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach, I will not, sir, assume the province of determining—but surely age may become justly contemptible, if the opportunities it brings have passed away without improvement, and vice appears to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch who after having seen the consequences of a thousand errors, continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object of either abhorrence or contempt."

But neither can Walpole claim the honor of originating this charge, for to go no farther back, it is as old as the days of Job, to whom his accusing 'friend' Eliphaz, the Temanite, said, "What knowest thou that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us? With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men much older than thy father," (Job, 15: 9, 10)—a mode of argument which caused Job in bitter sarcasm to say, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you."

To those who have no other weapon of defence than such an accusation, I commend as a subject of reflection, the following extract from the diary of President Edwards: "I observe that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries, because they are beside (contrary to) the way of thinking to which they have been so long used." I would also ask them to ponder the remark of that acute observer of men and things, Dr. Emmons, who though living to the advanced age of ninety-five, yet a few years before his death gave this advice to a distinguished minister, 'never dispute with a man who is over forty years of age'—a caution warranted by the reported fact that when the theory of the circulation of the blood was first announced, no physician over forty years of age, was known to abandon the old and exploded theory and to embrace the new and correct one. It may be then an advantage instead of a disadvantage to be a young man in these days, when slavery, intemperance and war are being driven from their 'scriptural' entrenchments.

The way has now been prepared for a consideration of the specific question in dispute as relating to slaveholding. If the remarks made upon the general principle are correct, the specific question is decided against the Board, on the ground of its anti-Christian results, when applied to other forms of wrong-doing. But it will not be satisfactory to drop the investigation here, and I therefore proceed to

THE SPECIFIC ISSUE.

The point on which the Board and the abolitionists are at variance, is the question—*Whether slaveholders are to be received into the*

Mission Churches? The Board decide that they may be received, and publish a labored report in defence of that position. Before discussing this topic, we need to consider a preliminary question, viz :

WHO ARE SLAVEHOLDERS?

There is much diversity in the use of this term, and many seem to be at variance, who if made to define their words, would learn that they agree. There have been many definitions of slavery as a condition, and of slaveholding as a practice, and in view of that fact, one astonishing characteristic of the Report is, that it studiously avoids defining the practice which it defends. Those who voted for the Report, and those who defend it, are by no means agreed as to the practice which is to be allowed in the mission churches under the ambiguous name of slaveholding. Some of them would permit the regular planter with his chattels, claimed and used as such, to come into the sacred inclosure, while others would say, no; we would allow such alone as merely stand in the legal relation of master to slave, but who practically give the slave his rights. The committee who drew up the report knew that the word slaveholder was ambiguous, for their Chairman, the Rev. Dr. Woods, prepared a document for their adoption, (which, however, was rejected,) avoiding almost entirely the words slave and slaveholder, which he read to a committee of abolitionists, of whom I was one. I asked him why he avoided these terms, and he replied, "I wish to be explicit, to discuss things, and not names, and knowing that the words in question were ambiguous, I have chosen others, such as servant and master."

Now is it not singular that the Committee, with a Chairman so cautious and clear-headed on this subject, should prepare a labored document in favor of receiving slaveholders into the mission churches, yet never inform the public of the precise sense in which they use the word slaveholder? Did they call to mind the saying of Dr. Emmons, 'Just definitions, like just distinctions, either prevent or end disputes,' and fear to define in the commencement of the report, lest something should need to come in afterwards which would be inconsistent with their explanation? It would have been interesting to read the Board's definition of slaveholding; and unless I am greatly mistaken, it would 'puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer' to make one which would suit all who voted for the Report. It was *'wise'* to neglect it, for had it read thus: "The slaveholder whom we would admit, is one who has on his plantation practical freemen, merely sustaining to them the legal relation of owner, which he cannot dissolve—that being under legislative control," it would have suited Dr. Bacon, and others,—but then it would unfortunately have excluded the particular slaveholders who are in the mission churches, and thus have failed of sanctifying the practice of the missionaries; since it can easily be shown, (and *will be*, ere I conclude this investigation) that the mission slaveholders do more than sustain this legal relation. But suppose the definition to have included not only those who sustain the *legal* relation of owner

of certain chattels, called slaves, but also those who proceed to use that relation and to treat the slaves accordingly, then the mission churches would be included ; but Dr. Bacon, and those whose opinions he represents, would have demurred. It relieved the report of much difficulty that it attempted no definition. I do not affirm that this fact was foreseen and the Report shaped accordingly, but I do affirm that the omission was for the Board a happy circumstance, and probably secured the unanimous vote which was the occasion of so much prenascent anxiety and postnascent joy.

THE DEFINITION GIVEN.

It seems to us to define a slaveholder is a very simple matter, and that those who protest against their admission into the churches, present a tangible proposition to the Board. What is a slave? Every school-boy knows the distinction between a freeman and a slave. He knows that a slave is a man in the power and wholly under the direction of a master, to be used by that master as he sees fit. If he is treated kindly it is a favor granted, not a right allowed. His time, labor, and talents, are expended for the master without other return than the food and clothing which the master is pleased in his own discretion to bestow. Above all, he has no personal liberty, no conceded right to go, as Carlisle would say, 'anywhere anywhen'—to be his own judge as to whom he shall serve, where he shall live, how long he shall remain, and what shall be the reward of his labor. Such a man is a slave ; and he who *holds*, that is detains and keeps him in this deprivation of liberty, is a *slaveholder*.

No,—no!—exclaims Dr. Bacon, and a host of others. You do, indeed, present a simple and tangible idea, and one apparently warranted by the composition of the word ; but nevertheless, we contend that if the law gives a man the power to use his fellow man as a slave, even if he does not exercise that power at all, he is nevertheless a slaveholder, and your definition is a mere quibble. Let us look into this logomachy—this war of words, it may appear to some.

THE DEFINITION TESTED.

Dr. Bacon, and his school of definers, say they use the word slaveholder in its every day meaning at the North and South. This I utterly deny. I hazard nothing in the assertion, that if Dr. Bacon should ask a Southerner for the most abstract definition that he could imagine, (and the more abstract the better for the Doctor's purpose,) he would never receive an approximation to his own definition. The word slaveholder never would convey to the mind of a Southerner such an idea as the Dr. contends for,—and why should it ? It is representative of no such person as the Dr. conceives. No such persons exist as those who have the power to use men as slaves, but in no instance, and to no degree, exercise the power. No statute book at the South sustains the mere legal relation doctrine, and it is opposed to every man's common sense. Let us test it by the application of the idea to a parallel word, *house-*

holder,—and in order to make an analagous case, let us suppose an instance where the law confers power to do wrong. Suppose a poor widow in Hartford has a house which is her all. The legislature pass a law by which the legal title to that house is iniquitously conveyed to me, and I am informed by the proper officer that I may consider the house my own. But I, horror stricken with the action of a legislature which ‘frameth mischief by a law,’ declare that I will not recognize the infamous deed, and though I may have a legal title, yet I will never use it. I go to the widow, who is weeping over the loss of her earthly all, and say—‘Madam, cease your weeping. This house I will never hold. Use it as long as you please. Alter, sell, burn, remove, tear down, as you will, I will not interfere, for the action of the legislature is infamous, and my legal title a clear fraud.’ Now, if I do as I say, who is the man that could properly affirm that I *hold* that widow’s house—that I am a fraudulent *householder*?

Let me apply this case to the question of slaveholding. Let it be supposed that in return for some public benefit, the legislature of South Carolina give me, by legal act, ten slaves. The fact is communicated to me. Detesting the abominable doctrine that man can hold property in man, I send word to the legislature that I will not be a slaveholder. They reply that the law of the State forbids my executing a deed of emancipation, and I must remain the legal owner of the slaves. I go to the slaves and say—‘The laws have created the relation of master and slaves between me and you, but I abhor and loathe the whole principle and practice of slaveholding. I am not permitted by law to dissolve the legal relation—only the legislature can do that; but the actual relation ceases from this moment. You may remain with me, or go elsewhere—labor at wages, or for such compensation as shall be agreed upon, or be idle; and, as a matter of fact, if not in the eye of the law, be your own masters.’ Now I maintain, that by such a declaration, and an accordant practice, I cease to be a slaveholder—I no longer hold, keep, detain these men as slaves. They are not slaves, whatever the law may entitle them—the idea of their being slaves, is a legal fiction. No man can be made a slaveholder against his will. The law may give him power to hold slaves, but if he will not hold them, but allows them to go where they please, or remain with him as practical freemen, he cannot be made a slaveholder, and should not be called such. That there are precisely such at the South, I should rejoice to learn, though the favorable cases usually presented, including the one mentioned by Dr. Bacon in his articles in the N. Y. Evangelist, fall far short of such a course.

LEGAL RELATION AND ORGANIC SIN.

What is the duty of a man who sustains the *legal* relation of slave-owner? Dissolve it, if the law allows: since, in case of his death, or bankruptcy, *the law* would seize upon the ‘slaves’ and hand them over mercilessly, to heirs or creditors. If the law forbids legal and technical emancipation, let the slaves be actual freemen in all re-

spects, and warning them of their danger in case of his death or failure, let him advise them to go North to a free country.

I agree, then, with Dr. Bacon, that the 'legal relation' does not involve guilt in the individual, *provided* he makes no use of that relation, and does all he can to have the laws repealed which forbid the executing a deed which would terminate even that relation—And this is all I conceive Dr. Edward Beecher means by the much abused and perverted, and probably unhappy phrase, 'organic sin.' The man who merely sustains the legal relation of slave-owner, but not as I should say, of *slave-holder*, Dr. E. Beecher would say was involved in 'organic sin,' without individual guilt. There is sin in the case, not in the man, but in the organized form of society which constitutes the legal relation. The guilt rests on the community generally, and on each one who does not put forth all his powers to rectify the legal organization of society. I must say that anti-slavery papers and orators and preachers, have too hastily condemned Dr. Beecher for coining an unhappy name, of which they did not or would not understand the real signification. If he has broached pro-slavery heresies aside from this, let him be held accountable.

THE BOARD'S REPORT NOT DEFENDED.

All these nice distinctions of Dr. Beecher and Dr. Bacon do not, however, aid the Board at all, even if I should concede their importance. They may talk to the day of their death about a kind of slaveholder who merely sustains a 'legal relation,' and ought not to be excommunicated on that account,—the plain truth is, the Report says nothing of such a class, does not pretend that such are the only ones who ought to be admitted into the church, but uses language at variance with that position. The Report, though it gives no definition of its own, yet makes assertions which allow us to know what it does *not* mean. I will not vouch, however, that it does not contain contradictions, since such may be detected, if I mistake not, even in the able articles of Dr. Bacon in defence of the Board. The Dr. in many places, seems to defend only those who have the power to do wrong, but refuse to use it, and yet somehow the cases he supposes are such as allow the *liberty* of the slave to be withheld, provided he is otherwise 'well-treated,' physically, mentally, and morally. I should like to place extracts from his different letters side by side, were my articles designed as a special review of those he has written. But to return, the question is not what Dr. Bacon, or any other man has said or written, or printed about slaveholders, but what does the Report of the Board say? What kind of evil-doers in this matter of slavery does the Report describe and defend? I think I can prove by fair extracts, that the Report in the main uses slaveholding in the sense I have defined as the true one—defends the admission of its practisers into the church, and speaks only of certain abuses connected with it, as being disciplinable.

WHAT SLAVEHOLDERS ARE TOLERATED IN THE MISSION CHURCH ?

This question is of great importance in deciding the propriety or impropriety of the late action of the Board. Dr. Bacon and others have labored through numerous and lengthy articles, to prove that certain abstract slaveholders, between whom and their fellow-men the laws have established a wrong relation, but who take no advantage of such wicked laws and oppressive relation, ought not to be excluded from the church. In my last number, the question, whether the abstract case supposed to be one of *slave-holding* or not, was considered and decided in the negative; but the present question still remains to be noticed and answered. Dr. Bacon may or may not be correct in defining slaveholding. He is responsible only for what he has written. His correct or incorrect views are not to be imputed to the Board. He is no 'federal head' to them; they are not to be condemned for his transgressions, nor is his righteousness to be set down to their account. My theology allows this in no case, and my common sense forbids it here. The Board are to be tried by their Report, which they unanimously adopted, and not by Dr. Bacon's amendment, which they did *not* adopt, nor by Dr. Bacon's articles in the *New York Evangelist*, which have been written since, and which, in my view, differ from the Report in various points. Let Dr. Bacon, or Dr. Beecher, or Dr. Any-one-else, advocate the admission of nonentity slaveholders, composed of no more substantial material than moonshine, and residing somewhere near the man in the moon, certainly not in this sublunary world; we may be amused or affronted at their articles, just as we please, the point at issue is aside from their hallucinations. *Who are the men whom the Board would retain in the Mission churches? Are they mere technical slaveholders, or, are they such as I defined in my last article, who use the legal relation to hold men as slaves?* Let my readers keep this point before their minds, and not suffer themselves to be diverted from the true issue. If I mistake not, the Report furnishes the reply to my questions, and to that reply let us now attend.

It will be granted by me that the mere existence of the legal relation of master and slave, constituted by law, and beyond the control of the individual, does not imply personal guilt in the master, it being supposed that he does not *use* that relation to *hold* his fellow-men as *slaves*. This position which I grant, Dr. Bacon and others 'contend for as defining the kind of 'slaveholders,' as they term them, who ought to be admitted into the mission churches. Notice, they contend for those whom they and I, absolve from individual guilt. But not so the Report of the Board. It contends for those in whose case it admits that there is a moral wrong. All the analogous cases quoted by it, prove this, such as polygamy, caste, oppressive ruling, war, &c. while specific assertions as to slaveholding itself contain yet more undeniable evidence. Did the Board stand where Dr. Bacon would represent it to stand, the whole argument of the Report would need remodelling. It would say—

We contend for the admission of those who do no wrong, who are chargeable with no sin in the matter at issue. But it does not say that; it declares, We ought to admit men who are engaged in wrong-doing, but upon whom the Gospel has not had time to produce its full effect. If I can show by fair extracts that the slaveholders tolerated and to be tolerated in the mission churches, are those in whose case sin is admitted to exist, then it is evident that the Report does not rely on the technical, legal-relation cases, made out by Dr. Bacon, in which latter, no personal guilt can be charged. The Board defend one course, Dr. Bacon another. To come then to the proof, does the Report use the word slaveholding throughout, as implying wrong-doing, or, does it regard slaveholding as consistent with innocence? Let the following extracts decide the question, it being premised that the Report uses slavery and slaveholding synonymously,—though they ought, in propriety, to be distinguished, slavery being a mere condition, the creation or perpetuating of which, that is, *slave-holding*, alone involves sin.

“Slavery is not the only social *wrong*,” &c. “Should it be found, as the result of experience, that souls among the heathen are, in fact, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, before they are freed from all participation in these social and *moral evils*, and that convincing evidence can be given that they are so regenerated—then may not the *master* and the *slave*, the ruler and the subject, giving such evidence of spiritual renovation, be all gathered into the same fold of Christ?”

“Whenever the Gospel is brought to bear upon the community where *slavery, or any other form of oppression* exists.” “How far holding slaves, or anything else involving what is *morally wrong*,” &c. “Strongly as your committee are convinced of the *wrongfulness* and evil tendencies of slaveholding,” &c. “The more they study God’s method of proceeding in regard to war, slavery, polygamy, and other kindred social *wrongs*, as it is unfolded in the Bible, the more they are convinced, that dealing with individuals implicated in these *wrongs*,” &c,

From these extracts, it appears that in whatever sense Dr. Bacon may use the word slaveholding, *the Report* signified by it a practice which involves sin, and when the Board voted unanimously to tolerate slaveholding in the mission churches, they voted to tolerate what their own Report uniformly admits to be ‘a social wrong,’ a ‘moral evil,’ a ‘form of oppression,’ ‘morally wrong,’ ‘wrongfulness,’ &c. Now, of what use is it for Dr. Bacon, and those who concur with him, to contend for that which they claim to be consistent with right, and suppose that they are defending the Board, when the latter contend for that which themselves admit to be morally wrong? Why should intelligent men thus impose upon themselves and others?

There is yet further evidence in the Report that the particular slaveholders now in the mission churches and who are to be retained there, are not those described by Dr. Bacon as having, but not exercising, the power to be oppressive. As a matter of fact they do not now give the slave his rights, and the Report does not require that they shall do so hereafter. What does the Report declare of the present and past treatment of the slaves by their church,

members? Does it assert that, practically, their rights have been sacredly guarded? Not at all. Truth forbade it. 'The most they could say in general, was,—‘The condition of the latter (the slaves,) has been, they (the missionaries) think, greatly meliorated.’ In plain English this is,—the slaves are not outraged as badly as they were before their masters joined the Church—the robbery is less extensive, though it still continues to be perpetrated. Reflect upon the following extract: ‘So far as the amount of labor required of their slaves, the food, clothing, and houses furnished for them, kind social intercourse with them, regard for the domestic and family relations and affections, and for their comfort generally and opportunities afforded for religious instruction and worship, are concerned, the missionaries think, that *instances of serious delinquency are very rare among their church-members.*’ Then instances of ‘*serious delinquency,*’ as to providing proper food, clothing, shelter, domestic comfort, religious instruction and worship, do *sometimes* occur among their church members. Surely, there must be something more than the mere possession of power—something more burdensome on the slave than a mere legal relation. But the Report says that ‘instances of *serious delinquency are very rare.*’ It does not tell us how often delinquency in the respects named, of a more venial character, (in their view,) occurs. For aught we are informed there may be a very frequent exercise of unjust power in comparatively small matters. This shows that on the most favorable presentation of the facts, enough leaks out to destroy the force of all defence of the Board, based on the right of merely abstract slaveholders to be received into the churches. Another extract places before us a yet more alarming state of things. ‘*Before it was forbidden by law, in 1841, numbers of their slaves were taught to read in Sabbath and some in week-day schools; and such instruction is still to some extent, given in private.*’ Christians who sustain the American Board, look at the facts revealed in this extract,—ponder the principle upon which *your* missionaries have acted, and declare whether it is accordant with the Bible. What are we told? That the members of the mission churches were engaged in the work of teaching the benighted slaves in Sabbath and in week-day schools, to read the Holy Scriptures, when of a sudden the civil authorities, leaving the things that belong unto Cæsar, and placing unholy hands on the things which belong unto God, forbade such instructions. What now, under the guidance of the missionaries, who are declared to have imitated the Apostles, did the mission churches do? Did they stand up, filled with the spirit of ‘Peter and the other Apostles,’ (Acts 5: 29,) and say, ‘We ought to obey God rather than man?’ Did they persist in instructing the slaves? Would to God, for the honor of Christianity, they had done so, and had taken the consequences as did the Apostles of old. But no; Nebuchadnezzar had erected his golden idol and they must bow down. The instruction of the slaves ceased, save that it is “to some extent,” (how great we are not told,) given in private. But the extract also gives a date, 1841, which affords a striking comment on a former report of the Board on the same subject. In the year 1841 they voted ‘that the Board of Commis-

sioners for Foreign Missions can sustain no relation to slavery which implies approbation of the system, and as a Board, *can have no connection or sympathy with it.*' At that very time their missionaries were abandoning the slaves to ignorance, practically preventing them from searching the Scriptures, and all in consequence of the unrighteous, atheistic laws of the Cherokee and Choctaw tribes? '*No connection or sympathy with it!*' I forbear comment, lest indignation should lead me to '*speak, unadvisedly with my lips.*'

What now is marked out by the Board as the future course to be pursued in the mission churches? Does the Report declare that such wicked laws are not to be considered binding? No. It disapproves of the laws, regrets that they have been passed, but neither commands nor advises that they be disregarded! Then something beyond a legal relation is to be tolerated hereafter, and this gives a clue to what is meant in another part of the Report by the *just treatment* which the slaves must have—a treatment not at all inconsistent with their being debarred from searching the Scriptures! But more of this anon. Additional evidence that practical freedom is to be withheld from the slaves hereafter as heretofore, is found in the argument of the Report for admitting slaveholders into the church, when the following language is used, '*Under such influences (that is, in the church,) may not the master be prepared to break the bonds of the slave?*' From this it will be seen that those who are to be admitted in future, are they who hold the slave 'in bonds,' which they are to be prepared to break (implying that such breaking of bonds is within the master's power,)—a strange way, surely, of expressing a mere legal relation, or the mere possession without the exercise of power! Indeed, Dr. Hawes is represented by various papers to have admitted that there was nothing in the Report inconsistent with the permanent retention of slaveholding in the mission Churches. The phrase quoted above—"May not the master *be prepared* to break the bonds of the slave" by being admitted to the church, is in principle happily illustrated by an incident recorded in the Presbyterian Herald, published at Louisville, Ky. The editor charged Rev. J. L. Forsyth, methodist preacher in charge at Fort Gibson, Miss., with admitting an infidel into the church. The preacher replies as follows, and I commend the closing part of his defence to the Board as a consistent application of their principle of "*preparing*" wrong-doers to "*cease to do evil and to learn to do well,*" by admitting them into the church. Says Mr. Forsyth:

"Now, according to the above mentioned prudential regulations, we did receive a man residing in this county, who had been known to be skeptical on the subject of religion, but who, at the time of his admission among us, was earnestly seeking for mercy and truth, he did candidly say that his mind was not fully satisfied of the inspiration of the Scriptures; but we could not think that, nay, we could not think it, a sufficient reason why we should drive him from even the outer court of the temple of righteousness and truth; rather we think it is a reason why he should draw nigh and see and hear and feel for himself, and know that the doctrine is of God.—

Now, sirs, where under heaven are there such spiritual influences as in the Church of Christ? or where are men of a skeptical cast of mind more likely to become convinced and converted, than in connection with those who feel the quickening power of the Spirit of God! "

Another item of proof that those to be received into the mission churches are bona fide slaveholders, as I have defined the word, is to be found in an extract from a speech of Dr. Chalmers, incorporated in the Report as an exposition of the views of the Board:

"Yet we must not say of every man born within its territory, who has grown up familiar with its sickening spectacles, and not only by his habits been inured to its transactions and sights, but who, by inheritance, is himself the owner of slaves, that, unless he make the resolute sacrifice and renounce his property in slaves, he is, therefore, not a Christian, and should be treated as an outcast from all the distinctions and privileges of Christian society."

From this it would appear that those who continue to hold their fellow-men as 'property,' who are unwilling to 'sacrifice' such 'property' in the bones, muscles, hearts and sinews of their fellow-immortals, are to enter our mission churches.

I think by this time, my readers are satisfied as to the kind of slaveholders tolerated by the Board.

There is one passage in the Report which to some may *seem* to be inconsistent with the position taken, and that passage will be thoroughly dissected when I come to consider whether slave-holding should be itself disciplinable, or only such bad treatment as may incidentally succeed the fact of slaveholding?

OUGHT DISCIPLINE ONLY TO REGARD THE TREATMENT OF THE SLAVE ?

The topic introduced to the reader by this inquiry has an important bearing on the question at issue between the American Board and Abolitionists. Abolitionists contend that the fact of slaveholding furnishes a sufficient ground of discipline and that those who, after due admonition and labor will not abandon the practice, ought to be excommunicated. The Report on the other hand declares that the fact of slaveholding, admitted by itself to be wrong, ought not to be considered a valid ground of exclusion, but that church discipline, should merely regard the treatment which is superadded. Hitherto I have been treating of the course to be pursued in the admission of new members; now, the inquiry relates to the disposal of slaveholders already in the churches, though at the same time it settles a principle which applies also to the first class; since, if the mere fact of slaveholding is not such a disorderly walk as to call for notice when the slaveholder is in the church, neither ought it to exclude him if he is an applicant for admission. The Report takes the position that the bad treatment of the slave which is superadded to the fact of holding, is the only ground of discipline. While it uniformly defends their admission into the church as far as their being slaveholders is concerned, it professes to have bowels of mercy for the slave, continuing such in the hands of its members. I

will quote the part of the report which bears on this topic, a part which many thoughtlessly regard as giving to it an anti-slavery character.

"Should any church member who has servants (a euphonism for slaves) under him be chargeable with cruelty, injustice, and unkindness towards them; should he neglect what is essential to their present comfort or eternal welfare; or should he in any manner transgress the particular instructions which the Apostles give concerning the conduct of a master, he would be admonished by the church, and unless he should repent, he would be excommunicated. Such appears from their communications to be the views of our missionaries; and such a course they think their churches would sustain."

This is very well as far as it goes, but it stops short of what the eternal principles of right demand. It does not require the master to give the slave his liberty, notwithstanding the fair-sounding words with regard to 'cruelty, injustice and unkindness.' It puts the poor slave into the hand of one who has no right to his labor, and then smoothly adds, 'Be sure you treat him well and avoid all cruelty, injustice and unkindness!' Now *mere words* do not satisfy reflecting men, until they know in what sense they are used, how much they imply, what they are understood to mean by those from whose lips they fall, and also by those to whom they are addressed. But not to multiply general observations, I will specify my objections to the rule laid down in the above extract, and which for the sake of brevity I shall term the treatment-rule.

1. *It is indefinite and ambiguous.* To a northern man it would mean one thing, to a Southerner, quite another thing. An anti-slavery friend of the Board would place an interpretation upon it widely differing from that of a pro slavery supporter. A. thinks it actually requires the slaveholder to abandon every thing but the legal relation which is out of his reach and can only be dissolved by law. B. on the other hand finds no evidence to support that position, and considers it as perfectly consistent with *claiming* and *using* slaveholding power. I must express my surprise that a rule of discipline should be couched wholly in general terms, which the Board must have known would be variously interpreted. If the rule aims at malpractice, why not specify some of the prominent forms which that malpractice assumes? It might have taken a few more lines, but what of that, when the happiness of multitudes hangs upon them. It cannot be said by way of excuse that this consideration did not occur to the committee. I deny it. It was laid before them when they had a meeting which I have before referred to, with a committee of abolitionists, of which Dr. Ide, was Chairman. Dr. Woods and Rev. Mr. Sandford of the Board's Committee were present. Dr. Woods read the document which he had prepared for the Board, which the committee did not adopt, but which contained a passage so nearly the same as the one quoted from the Report, if indeed it be not identical, that I can but think it was transferred from the one document to the other. I objected to it then as too general, and asked the Doctor to add something to this effect, which would be specific, 'If any church member shall buy, sell, or

hold his fellow-men as property, if he shall be guilty of whipping them, if he shall pursue and recapture them when they escape, if he shall neglect to pay them such fair compensation for their labor as may be agreed upon, &c., &c., he shall be disciplined.' But no such specification is found in the report, and I cannot conjecture why it should be avoided unless it would make the meaning *too explicit* and all men would see that to comply would be to give the slave practically his freedom, and thus it would fail of securing a unanimous vote in the Board, besides calling up opposition from slaveholders at the South. It is of no use to say that we are opposed to the exercise of 'cruelty, injustice and unkindness' towards the slave, when men differ so much about what these mean, *as applied* to slavery. I would mean by them the annihilation of slaveholding, and perhaps some of the Board voted with that understanding, but others would by no means include so much. Let me interpret and apply the rule in its widest signification, and I would be satisfied; but I am confident that such was not the intent of the framers. They were willing to pass by slaveholding to regulate the treatment which the slave, *as a slave*, is to receive. Even when viewed in that light the rule is ambiguous. What is kind and just treatment of a slave, the right to hold him being first conceded? The man of New England birth and education will give one description, the Marylander or Kentuckian, another, the South Carolinian or Georgian, a third, and the sugar-planter of Louisiana, a fourth. Each Southerner avers that he treats his slaves well, is guilty of no cruelty, yet can tell of others who do the contrary. Capt. Basil Hall writes in his Travels, 'The Virginian told me sad stories of the way in which the South Carolinians used their negroes; but when I reached that State I heard such language as follows, 'Wait till you go to Georgia, there you will see what the slaves suffer.' On reaching Savannah, however, the ball was tossed along to the Westward. 'Oh, sir, you have no idea how ill the slaves are treated in Louisiana.' Such facts are notorious, and in view of them, it is supremely ridiculous to make a rule couched in general terms, without specification, or illustration. Let me tell the Board that 'cruelty, injustice and unkindness,' may mean something different in the Choctaw and Cherokee country from what it does in Brooklyn. I am afraid that even the interpretation of this ambiguous rule which obtained at Brooklyn amid so many ministers who 'are as much opposed to slavery as anybody,' is exceedingly loose, if we may judge from one fact. The rule declares that the master will be liable to discipline 'should he neglect what is essential to their present comfort, or *their eternal welfare*.' Now a man with anti-slavery principles would interpret this to mean that the slave was to enjoy full religious principles as we do at the North. Alas, poor simpleton of an abolitionist, how could you be so ignorant of hermeneutics? Did you not notice the word '*essential*?' A world of meaning is wrapped up in that polysyllable. The Report so anxious to prevent 'cruelty, injustice and unkindness,' does not direct that the slave shall enjoy whatever is *promotive* of his 'eternal welfare,' but only what is '*essential*' to it! Thus if oral teaching suffices to take him to heaven, why no matter

about his learning to read the Bible, 'in Sabbath and weekly day-schools,'—that is not '*essential*' to his 'eternal welfare,' and besides it was 'forbidden by law in 1841 !' Hence the Report, as before mentioned, regrets that such an atheistic law was passed, but neither commands, advises, nor intimates that it ought to be disregarded, and the slave be enabled to 'search the Scriptures.' If now the Board interpret their own rule so loosely, what are we to expect will be its meaning among Choctaw and Cherokee slaveholders? When so many interests for time and eternity, depend upon the rule adopted by the Board, the form which it assumes seems like trifling, and it is a sufficient objection, were no other conceivable, that it is indefinite and ambiguous. This leads me to a second and kindred objection, viz :

2. *The rule is no protection to the slave in a slaveholding community.* We look upon slaves as men, and account the treatment which they receive as the treatment of men. But the slaveholder views the slave in a different aspect. To him he is a piece of property—a valuable working animal, for whom he or his father gave so many hundred dollars. Hence, just and kind treatment means to a slaveholder, something entirely different from what it means to us ; just as we consider treatment kind and just to a dog or horse which would excite our indignation if experienced by a man. The starting point of interpretation is so different in the mind of the two classes, that when we urge the slaveholder to be just and kind to his slaves, and to treat them well, he assents to it all, and yet by no means agrees with us. The fact is, that so accustomed do the masters become to the infliction of what we consider cruel treatment, that it ceases to be cruel in their estimation, and without any intention to deceive, they protest that they are kind and even indulgent ; just as we would resent the charge of cruelty to a dog, because we chastised him at times with a whip and even kicked him occasionally out of doors, when he would not otherwise go. To show the application of this principle, let me quote an anecdote from 'Slavery as It Is.' Judge Durell of N. H., was on one occasion denouncing the abolitionists because they falsely accused slaveholders of ill-treating the slaves. Said he :

"In going through all the states I visited, I do not now remember a single instance of cruel treatment. Indeed, I remember of seeing but one nigger struck, during my whole journey. There was one instance. We were riding in the stage, pretty early one morning, and we met a black fellow, driving a span of horses, and a load, (I think he said) of hay. The fellow turned out before we got to him, clean down into the ditch, as far as he could get. He knew, you see, what to depend on, if he did not give the road. Our driver, as we passed the fellow, fetched him a smart crack with his whip across the chops. He did not make any noise, though I guess it hurt him some—he grinned. Oh, no ! These fellows exaggerate. The niggers, as a general thing, are kindly treated. There may be exceptions, but I saw nothing of it." (By the way, the Judge did not know there were any abolitionists present.) 'What did you do to the driver,' said N. P. Rogers, who was present, 'for striking that man ?' 'Do !' said he, 'I did nothing to him, to be sure.' 'What did you

say to him, sir?' 'Nothing,' he replied: 'I said nothing to him.' 'What did the other passengers do?' 'Nothing, sir,' said the Judge. 'The fellow turned out the white of his eye, but he did not make any noise.' 'Did the driver say anything, Judge, when he struck the man?' 'Nothing,' said the Judge, 'only he *damned* him, and told him he'd learn him to keep out of the reach of his whip.' 'Sir,' said Rogers, 'if George Thompson had told this story, in the warmth of an anti-slavery speech, I should scarcely have credited it. I have attended many anti-slavery meetings, and I never heard an instance of such *cold-blooded, wanton, insolent, DIABOLICAL* cruelty as this; and, sir, if I live to attend another meeting, I shall relate this, and give Judge Durell's name as a witness of it.'

This shows the effect even on a Northerner, when he for a time forgets that slaves are men. Now the rule of the Board declines requiring the master to give the slave his liberty, thinks he is not 'prepared to break the bonds of the slave,' and contents itself with saying that he must treat them well in all respects, or else be disciplined. Who are to judge of the good or ill treatment? The church living in a slaveholding community and embracing slaveholders, and the missionaries who like all Southern ministers unconsciously to themselves, are inured to slaveholding practices and feelings. There is reason to fear that their interpretation of the general terms of the rule will be like their interpretation of the 'instructions which the apostles give concerning the conduct of a master,' to which this sage rule refers. Indeed this whole rule reminds me of the plan of getting Arminians to sign a Calvinistic creed by expressing it entirely in Scripture language, it being known that none will object to Scripture, and yet all will give it their own peculiar interpretation. So with this rule. To a Northerner it seems to give the slave his rights, while the Choctaw and Cherokee slaveholders will assent to it in a different sense, with as much complacency as a South Carolina slaveholder assents to the words of the Declaration of Independence, 'All men are created equal,' &c. The rule is worthless as regards the protection of the slave.

3. *The rule could with difficulty, if at all, be enforced, through lack of testimony.* In case of ill-treatment, (granting for argument's sake that the word is definite,) how shall the slaveholder be brought to justice? Who are to testify against him? The witnesses, if any, will be his own slaves; but is any man so simple as to suppose that after receiving abuse from the master, they will complain of him to the church, knowing that, as his chattels, he can punish them with exemplary severity? It will do very well, where all are free, to talk of disciplining men for not treating each other well, but to talk of exercising such supervision over the master, when the testimony must come from those in his power, is to utter nonsense, and to apply Dr. Bacon's classical phrase to the Board's own position, 'the churches won't stand such nonsense.' There has been experience of that fact in the Sandwich Islands. Dr. Lafon, who was a Missionary there, said at the Syracuse Convention,—

'He was opposed to taking in Chiefs, because they owned slaves. He acted upon that principle, until two Chiefs came to him with letters of recommendation, which, as a Presbyterian, he could not disregard. They soon had a "spree," bathed in the sea in an indecent manner; got drunk; of all of which he was informed by foreigners. He could not take their testimony; the natives told him the Chiefs were drunk, but when informed that they must testify, they all said they did not see it; others saw them; — and not a man or woman could be found who would testify to the facts as of their own knowledge. He obtained a decision of the Session, two elders and himself, to cut them off from the church. They could not get a church to stand up and vote a high Chief out. The Princess Henrietta was guilty of high sins; yet a Missionary would not think of getting a vote of her people to expel her from the church. The Episcopal mode sometimes took the place of Congregationalism; the minister took the place of Bishop; read them out of the church; and then fell back upon Congregationalism—just as circumstances required.'

The same difficulty would be experienced among Choctaws and Cherokees. No slave with a whipping in prospect, would testify against his master, and we may be sure that a master who would maltreat his slaves, would inflict additional cruelty if they dared to complain. The rule will be inefficacious from the nature of the case.

4. *The rule is unjust to the master.* If we concede, as this rule of the Board does, that the master may continue to *hold* the slave, and that such *slaveholding* is not a disciplinable offence, it is the height of injustice and folly to declare that he shall not resort to severity when he finds occasion. The Supreme Court of the United States have decided that when the Constitution bestows a certain power on the Federal Government, it is of course implied that the Government have also conceded to them the means necessary to exercise that power. Justice and consistency require such a construction. The case before us is similar. It is mockery and child's play to say the least, to tell the Choctaw or Cherokee slaveholder, You may retain your slaves, but you must not use the means necessary to retain them! Abolitionists and slaveholders, both contend, that the severity which the rule of the Board condemns, is a *necessary* appendage of slaveholding, and that if the one be allowed, the other must be also.* Like the Siamese twins, they are united in life and cannot be parted at death. Do my readers need to be told that the slave is not contented with bondage, is not willing to wait, until by church ordinances the master can 'be prepared to break his bonds?' He will, of course, be refractory, will refuse to work, will at times rebel against the authority of the master, backed up though it may be by church ordinances. What is to be done? He must, of course, be whipped, or chained, or placed in the stocks, or branded. Probably he will turn fugitive and run away from this church influence, fearing that his master will die before being suffi-

* In proof of this, see Wayland's Letter to Fuller, p. 23, and "Barnes on Slavery," pp. 201, 346.

ciently 'prepared to break the bonds,' especially as during the *thirty years* that the mission has been established, the first case is yet to be found in which a church member has emancipated his slaves! The Report of the Board which mentions all the favorable facts that could be collected, could not, certainly did not, refer to one such instance. What is the master to do about this slave who has broken his own bonds and is hastening, by wearisome night marches, to the North, to invoke the protection of some member of the Board who is 'as much opposed to slavery as anybody?' To use the language of Dr. Chalmers, so approvingly quoted in the Report, the master cannot be expected to 'make the resolute sacrifice and renounce his property;' hence he must mount his horse, and if need be, out with his blood-hounds, and scour the country, until 'his property' is secured. It is of no use to protest against the whipping, and the branding which will be inflicted when the fugitive is brought back—it is necessary to inspire terror in him and in the others, to maintain plantation discipline, which at the South as winked at and protected by the church, may, with terrible meaning, be called church discipline for offending slave members. You may cry shame! and call upon the master to desist, but in doing so you betray the weakness of your cause, the inconsistency of your arguments. You might as well tell a man that he has a right to go to a certain place, but must neither ride, walk, nor be carried—that he has a right to keep a horse, but must never apply the whip if he is lazy, and never go after him if he runs off, as to tell the slaveholder that he may retain his slaves, but must not do that which is necessary to retaining them! Let my readers notice the position, that if it be allowable to deprive men of their liberty, then it is allowable to use that degree of vigilance and severity which is requisite to gain that end. We concede, for instance, that it is allowable to deprive men of their liberty on account of crime, and to shut them up in prison. Hence we build prisons, provide bolts, chains, handcuffs, cells, and high walls. We place sentinels on guard, with loaded muskets to shoot down any prisoner who may attempt to escape. No man in his senses will condemn the means and defend the end, knowing that the former is necessary to the latter. Let my opponents be logically consistent, and if they allow of slaveholding, go for the whole—for whatever ignorance, heathenism, and suffering is indispensable to the *holding* of slaves. Be just to the master, either require him to renounce slaveholding or allow him free from church censure, to use such measures, however severe, as are requisite for the safe continuance of the practice.

5. *I object again, that even when as a slave, the man is 'well treated,' he is still robbed of his liberty, and the robber ought to be excluded from the church.* This famous rule goes on the principle that liberty is, per se, of little or no value—that plenty of food for the stomach, ample cloth for the back, some measure of instruction for the mind, and a freedom from blows, is enough of good for this life, and the fact that liberty is withheld, is such a trifle that it need not be taken into account. Ignoble calculation! The authors and defenders of such a sentiment, I fear, would sell their birthright, like Esau, for a mess of pottage. Little do such sympathize with our noble Decla-

ration of Independence, which declares that the right to liberty is inalienable, and places it by the side of the right to life. Little can they conceive the meaning of the impassioned prayer of Patrick Henry, 'Give me liberty, or give me death.' The aspiration of their grovelling souls would be, 'Give us enough to eat, drink and wear, and make us comfortable, and then bind on the chains if you will.'

In opposition to such debased views, in coincidence with the longings and promptings of manhood, and in sympathy with the Apostle, who said (2 Cor. 11: 20) 'For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage,' I assert, that aside from all questions of mere treatment, liberty is the next highest right to life, and he who deprives me of it and makes me a slave is a manstealer, and as such, should be refused admission to the church of Christ. I appeal to my readers. Who of you would consent to be a slave, even if assured of kind treatment? Who would surrender liberty for such a paltry price? To him who would insult you with the proposal, your reply would be, 'Never! I will sooner starve, and be free, than live a pampered slave.' My readers, Do unto others as you would have them do to you. As you would contend for your own rights, so contend for those of the slave. Why discipline a man for unkind treatment, and allow the prior and the higher crime of slaveholding to go uncondemned? So to judge, is as though a church should pass over an act of seduction, of which a member had been guilty, and excommunicate him because he turned his victim out of doors! This leads me to remark,

6. *I object to the rule as prescribing a peculiar treatment for the sin of slaveholding, such as is not applied in similar cases.* The common sense of every man tells him that to hold a slave is to rob a man of liberty. Why treat such a robber differently from other robbers? What would the American Board say if it should come to their ears that in a region of country where sheep-stealing and horse-stealing were common, their churches had received the thieves into the church? Would they prepare and adopt a report which should contain sentiments such as these? 'Let the thieves who in consequence of the silence of the missionaries as to the sin of sheep and horse-stealing, have not fully realized their guilt, and who consequently may give evidence of conversion, be received into the church, with the hope that eventually they may be prepared to restore the stolen property to the rightful owner. In the mean time, however, charge the thieves that they treat the sheep and horses well, that they give them plenty to eat and drink, allow them shelter in the winter, do not shear the sheep too close, nor ride the horses too far and too fast. If they refuse compliance with this rule, let them be excommunicated.' Christian reader, what kind of morality is that? It is the morality of the Report of the American Board, so far as I can understand it. The doctrine is—allow the master to hold his slave, but charge him to treat the slave well. Why not apply this rule to all cases of robbery, seduction, &c.? I do not wonder at the strenuous efforts of some defenders of the Board to make out slaveholding to be a 'peculiar' sin—it ought to be, to demand such peculiar discipline.

THE GROUND OF ABOLITIONISTS.

What now is the position of abolitionists? They urge the Board to strike at the root of the whole matter, by excising the practice of slaveholding itself. Do this, and as a matter of course, the consequences fall with their cause. Then a blow will be struck at sin in all its forms. The churches will be purged from impurity as far as this subject is concerned. Let the missionaries preach against *slave-holding*, let the churches refuse to admit additional *slave-holders*, and begin the usual process of discipline with those that are now within their pale. We do not ask that they shall perform impossibilities, we do not require that the legal relation shall cease, *if it is out of the master's power* to dissolve it, but we do demand in the name of bleeding humanity and a God of right, that as a matter of fact, the slave shall be free to go or stay, to work or not to work, to read, to write, to enjoy all manner of privileges as do laborers at the North. Why should so reasonable a demand be refused? Why bend the knee to wrong, and compromise with iniquity? Why declare that slaveholding is a peculiar sin, when its peculiarity lies in its peerless enormity, in the power and number and current respectability of its practisers and defenders, and the abominable means used for its protection?

CONSEQUENCES TO THE MISSION.

The Report rests the defence of the Board partly on the probable consequences to the mission among the Cherokee and Choctaw Indians, should anti-slavery principles be carried out. Its language is, 'The Committee believe, in agreement with the unanimous opinion of the missionaries, that any express direction from this Board requiring them to adopt a course of proceeding on this subject essentially different from that which they have hitherto pursued, would be fraught with disastrous consequences to the mission, to the Indians, and to the African race among them.' At the close of the Report, an extract from a letter of one of the missionaries is given, implying that opposition on their part to slaveholding would drive them from the nation. With regard to this plea, I shall make only a few brief remarks.

1. This is the old plan for a continuance of wrong-doing. The inexpediency of a course in itself right, is clamorously urged as a reason for not complying with the principles of the divine law.

2. The great question to be settled is, What is right? Determine that, and we need not regard the consequences. What propriety is there in meeting our arguments to prove the wrongfulness of the course adopted, by the plea that the success of the mission depends upon it? The success of the mission depends on wrong, does it? Then it is time that it was broken up.

3. It would be no new thing in the history of Christianity for a mission to be broken up, and yet it remains to be proved that temporary failures, occasioned by adherence to principle, are at all detrimental in the final result. Paul was driven from more than one

city for preaching against the practices of the inhabitants, but who thinks the cause of Christ was injured thereby? Would it have been better to have compromised with idolaters and remained in quiet? It would not be the first mission that the Board have abandoned, should the Indians expel the missionaries, and why should they represent it as so disastrous an event?

4. If the mission should be broken up by the authorities of the land, there is reason to believe that the moral effect would be great and beneficial. It would arouse our churches to an interest in the slave question, such as they have not before evinced—it would be a heavy condemnation of slaveholding which would be felt by the Southern churches—it would be a noble testimony before the world of our opposition to sin. It would be such an event as the Saviour contemplated when he uttered the solemn words, ‘Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.’

When the Board shall take a righteous position, and the missionaries shall have been driven from the Indian country for protesting against the enslaving of God’s children, I propose that, at the ensuing meeting of the Board, Dr. Bacon, or Dr. Hawes, or some other distinguished minister, preach by appointment, from Acts 13: 49—51, ‘And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region, but the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of the coast. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.’ Let this be done in the spirit of the primitive church, and the result would be the same as described in the 52d verse. ‘And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost.’

5. No man is competent to declare that the ultimate consequences of an abandonment of that mission would be worse than the ultimate consequences of adherence to the present policy of the Board. In contending for a principle, we must look beyond the incidental evils which may arise. The war of the Revolution was attended with many and sad evils, but the final results are such as no friend of the world regrets. The question whether the American Board as the organ of the American churches, is to propagate a gospel that will liberate or enslave the world, is of more importance than the question whether a partial, pro-slavery Gospel shall continue to be preached among certain Indian tribes.

THE APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE.

It will not be expected that at this late moment, I should enter upon the scriptural argument concerning slavery. That discussion would need a series of articles for itself alone. Indeed, the Board does not quote a single passage of Scripture in support of its positions, but simply refers in general to Apostolic instructions. All, consequently, that appertains to my duty at present is, to throw out a few hints which bear on this subject.

1. Was Christianity designed to be antinomian? There is nothing more susceptible of proof, than that slaveholding is a virtual

repeal of the decalogue, Did the Apostles promulgate a religious system which was to be a practical reversal of the commandments?

2. Was Christianity a retrograde movement, compared with Judaism? The decalogue, the Mosaic system, the writings of the prophets, are condemnatory of slaveholding. Did Christ lead the world backward on the subject of morals? Was he not, on the contrary, more strict than Moses, as is evinced by the Sermon on the Mount?

3. Does not the New Testament every where represent persistence in known sin as inconsistent with discipleship? If so, where would that rule place those who, after due instruction, persist in slaveholding?

4. Can it be proved that the Apostles did not substantially take the course I have recommended, viz: enjoin nothing about the legal relation, which was controlled then, as now, by government, but give such instructions as, fairly carried out, would, *as a matter of fact*, give freedom to the slaves, though their *technical* name might remain?

5. Are we not to have reference to the increase of light in the world on moral subjects? Are polygamists to be admitted now, because they in all probability existed in the primitive church, as may be gathered from the injunction that *bishops* and *deacons* must have *only one* wife, implying that private members were tolerated in polygamy? Does not the language of Paul apply—'The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent?' Are our duties the same as to the admission of distillers and rum-sellers now, that they were twenty-five years since? If it be then provable that there were slaveholders in the primitive churches, in days of darkness, under despotic Governments, with universal ignorance on the subject of human rights, does it follow that the same course should be pursued now, in altered circumstances? Is A. D. 1846, the same as A. D. 1? Is slaveholding to be treated in the same manner now when the indignation of the world is poured upon it, as it was when few, if any, questioned its authority?*

* I have previously adverted to the fact that the American Board have taken a position opposed to the growing convictions of philanthropists and Christians in all countries. Two recent occurrences forcibly illustrate this remark. Since the meeting of the Board, the Bey of Tunis, a *Mohammedan*, has abolished slavery throughout his dominions!

In August, of the present year, a World's Convention is to be held in London, to manifest and encourage the unity of Protestant Christendom. Provisional Committees of Arrangements have been appointed in the principal cities of England and Scotland, representing nearly or quite twenty denominations. At a joint meeting of all these Committees, at Birmingham, after four hours discussion, they *unanimously* adopted the following resolution:

"That while this Committee deem it unnecessary and inexpedient to enter into any question at present on the subject of slaveholding or on the difficult circumstances in which Christian brethren may be placed in countries where the law of slavery prevails; they are of opinion that invitations ought not to be sent to individuals who, whether by their own fault or otherwise, may be in the unhappy position of holding their fellow men as slaves."

As some stress is laid on the unanimity of the American Board, will my readers notice the unanimous action of a body of Christians, who, from their position would act unbiassed. If slaveholders are not fit to sit in a Convention, are they suitable subjects for churchmembership?

ORGANIZATION OF NEW CHURCHES FAVORABLE TO PURITY.

There is, in my view, a special aggravation of the pro-slavery action of the Board in the fact that their churches are comparatively young. Does any one need to be informed that with a church, as with an individual, it is easier to correct evils in youth than in old age? Dr. Beecher, in his articles in the *Boston Recorder*, has said that while he would have charity for churches recently formed amid heathenism, he would have little or none for the churches of the South who have tolerated slaveholding for two hundred years. With all deference to Dr. Beecher's superior wisdom, I must beg leave to differ, and to assert that churches where error has been fortified by long indulgence and immemorial custom, and prejudices which are the growth of successive generations, it must be a more difficult undertaking to secure a return to rectitude, than it would be to organize on correct principles at first. If the Dr. doubts, let him go into the forest and try his hand at straightening the gnarled and twisted oak of a hundred years standing, and then set out a young sapling and train it as he wishes. I think every minister at the South would declare that while in his view the old slaveholding churches cannot be induced to abandon that sin, and he has therefore ceased to urge the duty, he would regard it as a thousand fold more feasible to organize a new church, which should start with the fixed determination to admit no slaveholder to membership. I contend, therefore, that the Board are peculiarly guilty in founding *new churches* on wrong principles. They ought, in view of the seared consciences of the old churches at the South, and the seeming impossibility of leading them to repentance, to take warning, and in conducting their missions where slavery exists, to set their faces firmly against it from the first. But this they refuse to do. They are going on to increase the number of churches to be reformed—preparing a most difficult work for future accomplishment. Here I may incidentally say, that the Home Missionary Society are doing the same evil work by assisting slaveholding churches in Kentucky, Missouri, &c.

Let us derive an illustration from the Temperance reformation. The time was, when distillers and rumsellers were in all our churches. My readers know with what difficulty our communion has been purified—what strife, debate, contention, heart-burning and division were occasioned. At the present time, all new churches refuse to receive such persons, and thus avoid the evil. What now would be said if our missionaries, as they come in contact with intemperance on heathen shores, should receive distillers and rumsellers into the mission churches? They do not so act—they organize on correct principles at first, and thus forestall difficulty. They find the heathen in darkness on that subject, but as they themselves have light, they communicate knowledge and act from the light they have, instead of conforming their conduct to the ignorance of the heathen. Can any defender of the Board give me a valid reason why the missionaries should not act in precisely the same way with regard to slaveholding?

But, as I have before remarked, the Board seem to despise facts, and to regard only their pro-slavery theory. Lest my language should seem harsh, let me remind my readers of the opportunity the Board has had of learning that it is easier to begin right than to reform after beginning wrong. I have previously adverted to the fact that the mission churches in India acting on the principle of the Report, admitted caste into their inclosure, hoping eventually to induce their members to abandon it. They have failed in that effort and have of late been forced to deal with it directly as a disciplinable offence. Dr. Scudder of that mission, has recently said at a public meeting that 'he is convinced that they erred at first, in granting any toleration to this absurdity ; that they ought to have required every candidate for the church to renounce it and that *it is now much more difficult to break it down, and more difficult too, to establish right principles on the subject, than if they had begun right.*' When will the Board learn that both the Word and the Providence of God declare that 'He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.'

A SOLEMN QUESTION.

The facts that connect our professed Christianity with human oppression are such, that the intelligent and benevolent mind mournfully revolves the question, *Shall Christianity enslave the world ?* Answer me, ye friends of the oppressed, into whose ears the cries and groans of the slave enter, and who weep in secret places over his cruel sufferings, shall oppression find its strong hold in the religion of the merciful Jesus, who came to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ? As our missionaries multiply through the world, and heathenism and Mohammedanism fade away before Christianity, shall the only change the poor bondman experiences be the fact that his master has changed his creed ?

Think not that this is a question bounded by the limits of the Cherokee and Choctaw country. I have proved that the Report of the Board admits that the general principle involved, embraces sins which encircle the globe ; such as war, caste, oppressive ruling and polygamy. But even the specific position assumed in favor of slaveholders, applies to various other missions established and to be established. Notice the coolness with which this important fact is acknowledged in the Report. 'The evil of slavery will probably be met in some form in nearly every part of the great missionary field, and the principles adopted must affect the whole scheme for evangelizing the world.' Again, 'Involuntary servitude is believed to pervade nearly the whole African continent, though with widely different degrees of severity. In some form it exists in many, if not all parts of India. It pervades Siam and nearly all Mohammedan communities, and it will probably be found, in some of its modifications, in China and Japan.'

The policy of the Board is to establish slaveholding churches throughout the world, to erect the most formidable bulwark around slavery that human hands can rear : for all experience in the cause of

emancipation proves that the oppositon of the professedly Christian church is the most serious obstacle to be removed. Let me fortify this position by a short extract from a sermon of Rev. Albert Barnes preached last year.

“Advert for a moment to the efforts which are made to remove slavery from the world, and to the hindrances which exist to all efforts which can be made to remove it, in consequence of the relation of the church to the system. Reflect how many members of the Christian Church, and how many ministers of the Gospel, are owners of slaves; how little effort is made by the great mass to dissociate themselves from the system; how many are there, even in the pulpit, who openly advocate it; how much identified the system is with all the plans of gain, and all the views of comfort and ease of domestic life among many members of the Church; and how faint and feeble is the voice of condemnation of the system uttered by the great mass, even of those who have no connection with it; and how often the language of apology is heard, even then; and it is easy to see how ineffectual must be all their efforts to remove this great evil from the world. The language of the ministry, and the practice of church members, give such a sanction to this enormous evil as could be derived from no other source, and such as is useless to attempt to convince the world of the evil. Against all this influence in the Church in favor of the system, how hopeless are all attempts against it; while yet no one can doubt that the Church of Christ in this land has power to revolutionize the whole public sentiment on the subject, and, to hasten the hour when, in the United States and their territories, the last shackle of the slave shall fall.”

Again. “What is it that lends the most efficient sanction to slavery in the United States? What is it that does most to keep the public conscience at ease on the subject? What is it that renders abortive all efforts to remove the evil? I am not ignorant that the laws sustain the system, and that supposed interest contributes to it, and that the love of idleness, and the love of power, and the love of base passions which the system engenders, and that a show of arguments, opaque and inconclusive on one side of a certain line, but bright as noon day on the other, does much to support the system. But after all, the most efficient of all supports—the thing which most directly interferes with all attempts at reformation; that which gives the greatest quietus to the conscience, if it does not furnish the most satisfactory argument to the understanding, is the fact that the system is countenanced by good men; that bishops, and priests, and deacons, that ministers and elders, that Sunday School teachers and exhorters, that pious matrons and heiresses, are the holders of slaves, and that the ecclesiastical bodies of the land address no language of rebuke or entreaty to their consciences.”*

I appeal to my readers, Shall the Board, under the delusion that they are promoting thereby the cause of Christ, be allowed to place as a guard before the sin of slaveholding, (that ‘sum of all villanies,’ as John Wesley called it)—the army of their churches?

*See also Barnes’ new work ‘On Slavery,’ pp. 382—384.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES ACCOUNTABLE.

It is incumbent on the churches to be jealous of their liberties.—There is no ultimate triumph of Christianity without freedom in the church. Our fathers realized this truth, and contended nobly for their religious rights, though they periled all in the struggle. The fundamental principle of religious liberty forbids a control of the church, by any power out of itself, nor is there a material difference whether the power that seeks control or that actually controls, be a creature of the state or of self creation. Its origin is of little consequence—the fact, that it undertakes to dictate to the church, itself not being the church, is the aspect of danger; just as the particular country from which an invading army comes, is of small importance, compared with its numbers, its discipline, its equipments, its resources, and the fact that it seeks to impose laws, or a government upon us, to which we have never assented.

The churches of the United States are sufficiently on their guard against the encroachments of the civil power, but I question whether they are awake to danger which threatens from another quarter, even from bodies which *profess* to be religious in their character, and to be nothing more than the servants of the churches. I refer to the Benevolent Societies of our land. I do not intend to charge them with *seeking* to enslave the church, but I do fear that practically the liberties of the churches will perish, or will be unconsciously abandoned, in consequence of the growing power and increasing authority of the Societies.

I shall no doubt be told that there can be no ground for fear, since those societies are managed by the pastors and members of the churches. There would be more truth in that assertion were the definite article dropped before 'pastors,' and were the word 'managed,' emphasized. Certain men, a certain class of pastors and church members control these societies, and I fear lest a love of power and a determination not to be thwarted in their favorite plans and measures, may induce in the societies an overawing influence, and in the churches a craven spirit of universal compliance. The fact is, that though the societies are *professedly and nominally* the servants of the churches, *in reality*, they are MASTERS. They feel in a great measure irresponsible, and they act accordingly. Those who presume to differ, are whipped (by denunciation) into compliance, or else discarded and thrown down from a good standing in their denomination. Thus the scene witnessed by Solomon, is re-enacted. (Eccl. 10: 7) 'I have seen servants (benevolent societies) upon horses, and princes (the churches) walking as servants upon the earth'—a sight so unbecoming, that the wise man said of it elsewhere, (Prov. 19: 10, 30: 21, 22) 'Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.' 'For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear; for a servant when he reigneth,' &c.

Allusion may be made to a few facts in this place. It was discovered that the American Tract Society had been mutilating the books which it republished, changing and suppressing doctrinal sen-

timents of standard authors, as also historical facts. 'The Synod of New York and New Jersey had their attention called to the matter, when the Rev. Dr. McAuley, at that time one of the Executive Committee of the Society rose and told the Synod that they had no business to be prying into the concerns of the Tract Society—the Society was not responsible to them, &c. When the Synod persisted, backed up by other ecclesiastical bodies, it is well known that prominent officers of the Society, verbally and by letter, assailed the motives of those who wished an investigation, and defied their efforts, declaring, to use the language of one letter, that they would carry their point 'despite the opposition of doctors of divinity, theological professors, and sniveling ministers.' And they have carried their point, and are yet pursuing the same course of alteration and mutilation, having achieved a victory over their 'masters' (!) and gained their desired position of practical irresponsibility. This for the professed 'servants of the churches' is emphatically, 'high life below stairs.'

A similar course is, in effect, pursued by the American Board, not by official act, but through its chief supporters. The Board was organized to be a channel of communication with the heathen world for such as chose to use it. They professed a willingness to be stewards and almoners of our bounty. The churches of the Presbyterian and Congregational order fell into the arrangement. Of late many have discovered that the Board have acted on wrong principles with regard to slaveholding, have fallen back on their church rights, have remonstrated with the Board, and have withdrawn their funds. What has been the consequence? Those churches and ministers who have so acted, have been denounced, and have lost caste, just as though the question what society they would use for missionary purposes had any thing more to do with church standing, than the question what domestics they would employ in their families. What would be thought if a minister should lose caste among his brethren because he chose to employ colored servants, while they preferred the Irish? Missionary Societies are the *servants* of the churches, and we may employ one or another as we see fit, and no man, no body of men has a right to call us to account for preferring one and rejecting the other; and the fact that such an ado is made because some oppose the Board, proves that instead of regarding itself as a servant, it is putting on the air of a master.—Churches of Christ, maintain your liberty unimpaired. Hold your servants to an account. Dismiss them without hesitation when you see cause, and allow no power behind the throne, no authority in theory or in fact out of the church. I feel that the American Board ought particularly to be watched, because it is in no manner responsible to the churches, being a close, self-perpetuating corporation, in whose concerns none have a vote but a privileged class who have been elected 'corporate members.' Who are these corporate members? I will not speak disrespectfully of them, but I assert, that they are selected from the class who are the last to be affected by a new moral reformation—the last to feel the influence of the churches. An analysis of the Board will prove this. The Board consists of 183 members. Of these *twenty-nine* are Presidents and Profes-

sors of Colleges and Theological Seminaries, *eighty-four* are Doctors of Divinity, and *nineteen* are 'Honorable.' A too small portion of the ministers are *pastors*, and it would seem that the readiest way of becoming a Corporate Member is to become, if possible, a Professor, President, Doctor of Divinity, or an Honorable. These are doubtless good men, and yet are of that peculiar class whose position and circumstances make them especially averse to reforms, and peculiarly '*conservative*.' There is only one way for the churches to reach the Board, and that is by the apparently ungracious mode of withdrawing pecuniary support. If abolitionists resort to that, it is because it is the only course the organization of the Board allows.

HOW SHALL THE BOARD BE TREATED ?

I have not space to discuss this point at length, but would briefly remark,

1. In the matter of contributions, I would give them a 'terrible letting alone,' at least for the present.

2. In the matter of words, I would remonstrate steadily, by speech, by pen, by press, till their unchristian position is abandoned.

3. In prayer I would supplicate God to enlighten the Board, that thus their influence may not be added to the weight that already crushes the slave. In the mean while, I would patronize the Union Missionary Society, the West Indian Committee, the Western Evangelical Missionary Society, and other bodies which propagate a 'pure and undefiled religion.' The withdrawal of one or two hundred churches would do more to open the eyes of the Board than any other measure, just as one day's endurance of slavery would enlighten the minds of pro-slavery men, more than scores of arguments.

In conclusion, let me add, that if any one undertakes a reply to these articles, (and the columns of anti-slavery newspapers, unlike those of the other side, are always open to opponents,) let him argue for the Board *as represented in their own Report unanimously adopted*, for I have carefully adhered to that document when speaking of the Board.

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